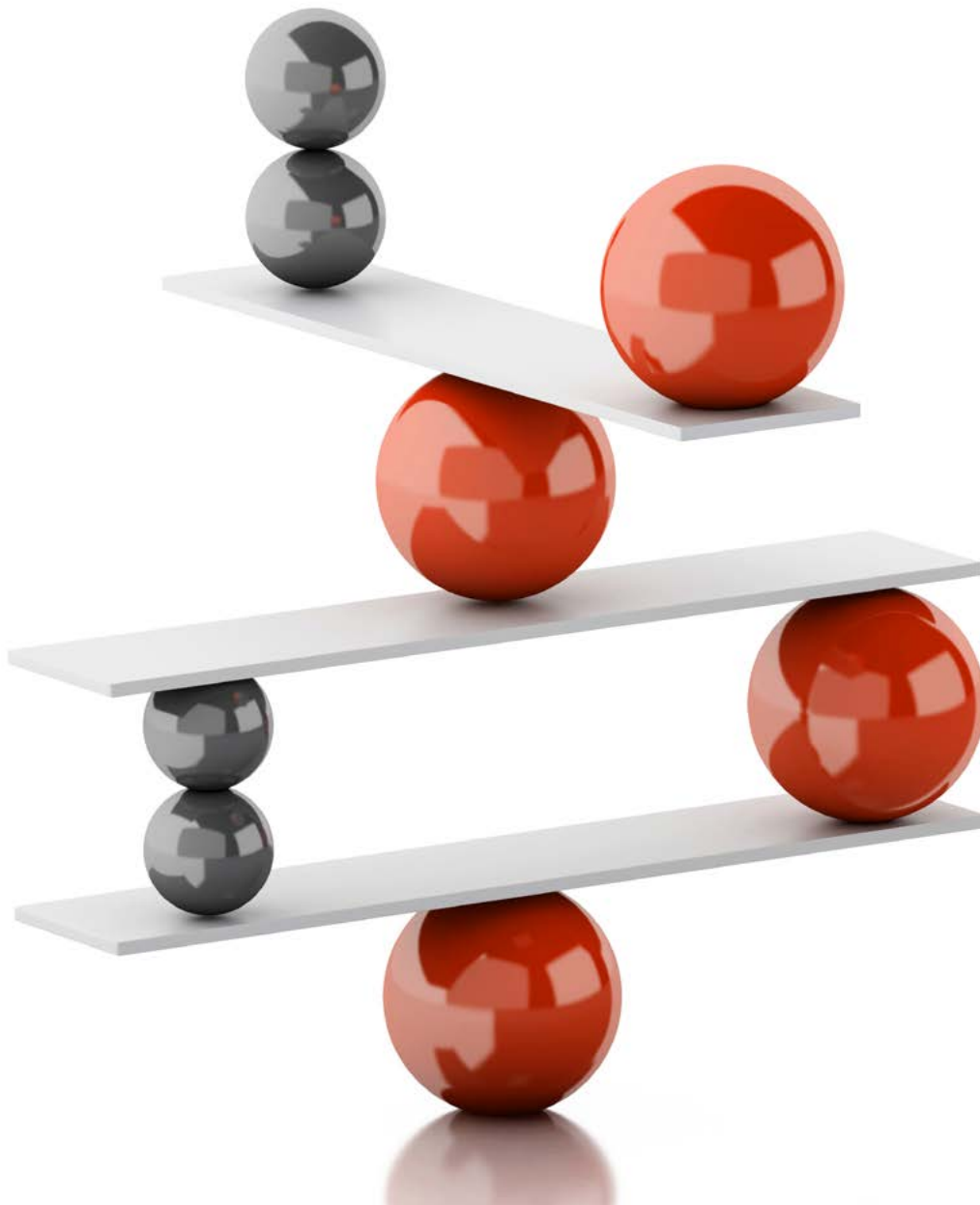


Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study 2016



Child Welfare Workforce Stability
in the Context of System Reform

Authors

Kristine Piescher, PhD
Traci LaLiberte, PhD
Elizabeth Snyder, MSW
Sandra Ayoo, MA
Misty Blue, MPH

Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW)
School of Social Work, University of Minnesota

Acknowledgements

Researchers at the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare acknowledge and express gratitude for the work of numerous individuals and organizations resulting in this important publication. We wish to recognize our funders and state partners at the Minnesota Department of Human Services' (DHS) Child Safety and Permanency Division for their financial and programmatic support, which informed the construction of the survey instrument. Partners at the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) provided critical feedback on instrument development and sampling, as well as facilitated the implementation of the survey itself. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the individual contributions of Eric Ratzmann, MACSSA Director, as well as Brenda Mahoney of Stearns County and Jodi Wentland of Hennepin (and formerly Olmsted) County as co-chairs of the MACSSA Children's Committee. County Directors and Managers from child welfare divisions across the state distributed the survey and completed follow up contact with staff on behalf of researchers. We believe this contributed to the higher-than-average response rate and that the research benefited greatly from their contributions. Finally, researchers wish to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce. Those who chose to participate in this survey contributed their time and intellect to informing critical questions facing the state during a time of intense system reform with mounting workloads, increased scrutiny, and with staffing shifts and turnover not previously experienced.

Authors of this publication also wish to thank individuals at the School of Social Work for their many contributions to this project. Specifically, we acknowledge the work of Karen Goodenough for her work on the study design, data collection, and preliminary descriptive analysis. We also acknowledge the work of Dr. Mihwa Lee on the descriptive analysis and David Glesener, Renada Goldberg, and Keely Vandre for their assistance in the development of this report.

Contents

Authors.....	ii	Appendix B3	
Introduction.....	1	Child Protection Statewide Qualitative Findings.....	26
Methods.....	1	Method.....	26
Key Findings.....	2	Summary of themes.....	26
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	5	RESULTS.....	27
Appendix A		Appendix B4	
Methods.....	8	Region Specific Reports.....	47
Participants.....	8	Region 1	
Instrumentation.....	8	Quantitative Findings.....	47
Analytic Plan.....	8	Region 2	
		Quantitative Findings.....	53
		Region 3	
		Quantitative Findings.....	59
		Region 4	
		Quantitative Findings.....	65
		Region 5	
		Quantitative Findings.....	71
		Region 6	
		Quantitative Findings.....	77
		Region 7	
		Quantitative Findings.....	83
		Region 8	
		Quantitative Findings.....	89
		Region 9	
		Quantitative Findings.....	95
		Region 10	
		Quantitative Findings.....	101
		Region 11	
		Quantitative Findings.....	107
Appendix B1			
Child Protection Regional			
and Statewide Quantitative Findings.....	10		
Workforce Demography.....	10		
Workforce Stability.....	16		
Appendix B2			
Quantitative Comparison Findings.....	20		
The Role of Title IV-E Education and Training.....	20		
Professionals of Color.....	20		
Agency Role – Supervisors vs. Frontline Staff.....	22		
Social Work Degree Attainment.....	22		
Graduate Degree Attainment.....	23		
Tenure within the Field.....	24		

Introduction

A stable, well-trained, and supported workforce is critical to providing effective child welfare services. Because Minnesota operates under a county-administered, state-supervised structure, the status of Minnesota's child welfare workforce is not well understood. Therefore, this study was developed to fill this gap at a critical point in time for Minnesota in which the child protection system was undergoing deep system reform and the workforce was reporting great challenge and turnover.

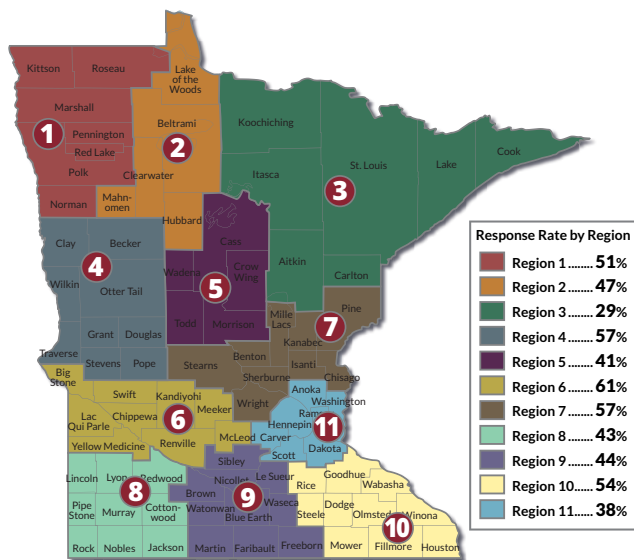
In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during this period of change, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. This report provides statewide and regional descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of Minnesota's child welfare workforce. Key findings are highlighted within the body of the report, with additional detailed findings provided in appendices. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability, thus this report highlights these factors, and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Also worthy of note is the fact that researchers received an unexpectedly large number of qualitative responses to the survey; these responses provided the opportunity to gain a rich understanding of workforce perceptions and experiences, even beyond those topics of focus within the survey. Themes highlighted within the body of this report represent either those aspects that researchers deemed of most importance or those that were shared across quantitative and qualitative responses. A more robust description of the quantitative and qualitative findings can be found in the report appendices.

Methods

The Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study was designed to inform the development of strategies to stabilize the child welfare workforce and ensure employee retention in a time of child protection system reform. The Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Survey was developed by a team of researchers at the University of Minnesota and informed by a comprehensive review of existing literature, including previous research conducted by Ellett, Ellett & Rugutt (2003). The survey was presented to MACSSA and representatives of the Children and Families Division of DHS for review, modification, and adoption prior to implementation. The workforce survey consisted of 67 items assessing the demographic characteristics of the workforce, role within the agency, job satisfaction (including satisfaction with organizational issues, policy and program development, experiences with secondary traumatic stress, and supervision), workforce stability, and perceptions of child protection reform efforts taking place in Minnesota. Professionals were also given the opportunity to offer additional feedback or clarify any survey responses at the end of the survey through two questions: "Please tell us if there is anything else that would increase your likelihood of staying employed in public or tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency" and "If you would like to clarify any of your responses or give additional feedback or consideration, please share below."

Front-line child welfare professionals, including supervisors, were invited to respond to the survey through an email sent by each county director in February, 2016. Following distribution of the survey invitation, county directors reported that they invited 1,948 child welfare professionals (including child protection services, children's mental health, foster care, adoption and permanency, prevention and early intervention services, and other related children's services) to complete the survey. A total of 862 child welfare professionals responded to the survey (44% statewide response rate) of which, 823 contained complete information items contained within the survey. Eighty-one (of 87) counties responded to the survey (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey response rates by region



This report focuses on the responses of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota (n=734). While the responses of professionals working outside of these fields (e.g., children’s mental health, prevention and early intervention services, and other related children’s services) largely mirror those working in child protection, the small sample size of this group limited their inclusion in subsequent analysis. Thus, these findings are not presented in this report.

Descriptive and chi-square analysis of quantitative responses were conducted via SPSS 24; inductive thematic coding of qualitative responses was carried out via NVivo 11 (for additional detail about the methodology employed in the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study, please see Appendix A.).

Key Findings

Numerous findings emerged from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of survey responses. Findings reveal important information about Minnesota’s child welfare workforce, including the characteristics of professionals who make-up the workforce, as well as the environment in which they work and the broader policy and practice contexts which emerged during this period of child protection reform. A summary of the key findings are presented below. A detailed description of quantitative and qualitative findings can be found in Appendices B1-B4, including responses given in the professionals’ own words.

Workforce Characteristics

Most of the professionals that responded to the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (85%). Survey responses revealed that Minnesota’s child protection workforce lacks the diversity of the state, and of the children and families served within the child protection and permanency spectrum. The workforce is predominantly white (87%) and female (90%). Racial/ethnic and/or gender diversity in the workforce was primarily found in metropolitan areas and/or regions with significantly-sized American Indian communities. Minnesota has a generally well-educated workforce, with specific training and preparation for social work and child protection.

Changing Demography

Minnesota’s child protection workforce is currently in a state of flux, and is about to experience a dramatic shift of demography. With respect to age, one out of every four professionals is less than 30 years old and one out of every eight professionals is greater than 56 years old. Of particular importance to those in the older demographic group is the fact that one out of every five professionals will retire within the next 10 years, with more than half of all planned retirements occurring within the next five years. The experience level of the existing workforce mirrors that of its age distribution; one out of every three professionals has less than two years’ tenure in the field, but one out of every four professionals has 15+ years of tenure. As professionals in the workforce begin to retire, the historical and organizational knowledge of those with the most tenure may be lost if transitions are not intentional.

Job Satisfaction

One out of every three child protection professionals reported being dissatisfied with their jobs. Part of the dissatisfaction may stem from the workload requirements of current child protection practice. In fact, two-thirds of professionals reported being overwhelmed by their job duties. This was a major theme that emerged from qualitative responses as well. In particular, professionals shared comments highlighting concern about overwhelming caseloads, burdensome documentation requirements, being understaffed, and job responsibilities fraught with unrealistic expectations. For example, one professional stated:

“...the sheer amount of duties expected to be completed in a timely manner is nearly impossible due to extremely high and intense caseloads.”

Another professional related these concerns to workforce instability and turnover:

“The current demands on child protection workers are unreasonable and have a negative impact on workers, health, mental health, and family life, [and] until these demands are decreased or additional staff are appropriated there will continue to be a flow of educated, dedicated, experienced staff members leaving child protection for other areas of social work that do not place such unreasonable and unattainable demands on workers.”

Secondary Traumatic Stress

A large and somewhat startling proportion (83%) of child protection professions indicated Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) negatively influenced their work and overall well-being. The vast majority of professionals reported experiencing secondary traumatic stress as a result of their work in child protection. More alarmingly, more than one out of every three professionals (37%) reported that STS not only negatively affects their ability to do their job, but that they also did not have the support needed to manage this stress. This theme emerged in qualitative responses as well, despite no direct inquiry related to secondary traumatic stress within either open-ended survey question. Several responses highlighted that the nature of child protection work holds the risk of experiencing STS (see “Toll on the Workforce” in Appendix B3). One professional stated:

“In my 30 years of experience I have never seen a professional social worker in CPS have a healthy spirit, mind, body, and soul at time of retirement.”

Although some professionals responding to the survey talked about the consistent nature of STS in child protection work and its toll on professionals’ well-being, one professional noted that:

“This is the worst it has ever been and the number of employees that are suffering with mental health issues, family problems, seeking medication, self-medicating is overwhelming.”

Another professional talked about the relationship between secondary traumatic stress and workforce turnover by stating:

“...I am retiring early as I feel I can no longer work with victims as I have been most of my career. I am tired of seeing the underbelly of society. This work has changed my worldview and I am a more negative and anxious person because of it. I am relatively happy in my personal life but my perspective has become jaded.”

Fear for Personal and Family Safety

Not only did professionals express that they experienced STS but they also acknowledged being afraid for their own and for their family’s personal safety. More than half of all professionals (58%) reported sometimes being afraid for their personal safety, and a third of all professionals (36%) reported sometimes being afraid for the safety of their own family. Safety concerns were more common - for both personal and one’s own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota where many rural communities exist. Professionals shared concerns about personal safety in open ended questions (see “Child Welfare Work” in Appendix B3). Examples include:

“Safety for the workers [includes using] technology advances (making sure each worker has a smartphone or iPad) to use while making home visits and to ensure safety. [This is] VERY IMPORTANT TO SAFETY. Training workers to use tasers especially in Child Protection is necessary”

“Somehow, address the need for personal safety. Law enforcement can attend investigations/assessments, but the ongoing workers regularly attend homes and do not have Law Enforcement. Also, somehow make it so the personal worker cannot be responsible (or identified as the person) making decisions for cases. It makes them a target!”

Supports & Positive Impact

Despite the reported hardships faced by professionals working in child protection, a number of professionals responding to the survey also stated that they felt supported in their work and that they had a positive impact on the children and families with whom they worked. The vast majority of professionals (78%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received and nearly all professionals said that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (94%). However, half of all professionals reported their supervision is centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance. On the other hand, professionals felt that their supervisors were willing to help

when problems arose (90%), as were their peers (95%). Perhaps most importantly, nearly all professionals (96%) believed they have a positive impact on the lives of their clients.

Input into Decision Making & System Reform

A key theme arising from open-ended survey responses concerned professionals' concerns about the recent child protection reform efforts following the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children and the involvement (or lack thereof) of child protection professionals in these reform efforts. While questions about reform efforts were included in the quantitative portions of the survey, professionals also provided a number of comments about reform in response to the specific questions, "Please tell us if there is anything else that would increase your likelihood of staying employed in public or tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency." and "If you would like to clarify any of your responses or give additional feedback or consideration, please share below." While some of the information professionals shared was described in other sections of this report, primary themes referenced by professionals included aspects of the reform itself as well as the impact of the reform on the workforce (see "System Reform" and "Toll on Workforce" in Appendix B3).

Given the recent focus on the reform efforts taking place in Minnesota's child protection system, it is not surprising that professionals working in the field were not only informed of these efforts but also felt significantly affected by them. Survey responses revealed that the vast majority of professionals said that they were generally aware of the reforms taking place (86%) as well as specific elements of reform and their impact on practice (74%). Child protection professionals' comments regarding the reform itself focused on concerns about flawed policies, deficits associated with the child protection system, concerns about the contribution of recent reform efforts to increasing racial disproportionality and disparity, and workers and supervisors not being involved in the process of reform, among others (Appendix B3).

Examples of responses that highlight professionals' concerns associated with system reform include:

"The 'state' (DHS), legislature and government leaders really are ill-informed about what this job really entails and how intrusive it is in family's lives and because of negative publicity I feel we are targeting families of color and families of lower economic status; that feels ethically wrong to me."

"DHS/ The task force have made some good changes in screening guidelines. They have failed, however, in my opinion to talk to front line workers about what is going to help and increase child safety. There are things mandated that are very time consuming and sometimes have nothing to do with immediate safety of children. It does not appear DHS is willing to change any of those things are even have a discussion with the front line workers about those things."

"The task force included stakeholders from all areas (doctors, attorneys, directors etc) but NO actual CPS workers. Again, shows us how [under]valued our opinions are. We are the ones that directly work with clients and we know the barriers and weaknesses in the system."

"The reforms that the Governor's Task Force has proposed will only serve to complicate an already complicated service that we provide. I do not see them manifesting a real benefit to the children, as what is addressed were low incident issues. The resources taken to rectify those ills could be better used somewhere else."

"Our system/government task forces seem to be very reactionary. As a result some very unrealistic practices may be put into place that will reduce the amount of time workers can actually spend with clients, increase the costs to [the] public for services, and create a shortage of workers."

All of these concerns associated with system reform were also connected to the toll on the workforce and how it affected their ability to be effective in their jobs. Child protection professionals expressed not feeling heard or valued, feeling increased strain, and feeling unable to do their jobs effectively. Comments that illustrate the impact of reform on worker well-being include:

"I'm disappointed because I know we will return to focusing on well-being again one day--it's disheartening that so many workers will be lost, children and families will be traumatized and taken from each other because the pressure we feel to keep the children physically safe, even when we know the trajectory that path puts them on. I don't know if I want to be a part of that unless my involvement in child protection can be part of the solution."

"We are often at our computers but are expected to be out in the field. Also the database, policies and laws are always changing which makes workers feel as if they never know enough. It also makes us feel like we can never do enough or do it well enough for the federal and state expectations. We also often feel as if we can never catch up on all of the work. This is the only job I have ever had that where it is difficult to feel like I have done a 'good job' and am successful in my work."

When asked specifically about their perceptions of reform, professionals' responses similarly highlighted the concerns they expressed in open-ended responses. Overall, responses indicated a lack of support from local agencies as well as from DHS. While professionals reported higher levels of satisfaction with communication from their local agency than that of communication by DHS, one out of every three professions expressed dissatisfaction by agency-level communication and two out of every three professionals expressed dissatisfaction with communication by DHS. Similarly, more than a third of all professionals (36%) reported they did NOT have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked and one out of every three professionals reported their local agency has failed to advocate for both clients and the workforce itself in the current context of reform. Nearly every professional (94%) who responded to the survey indicated that a need remains to increase public awareness around the nature and value of CPS work.

Turnover

Not surprising given the themes that emerged from the survey, many professionals had looked to move to a new agency, or leave the field altogether. In fact, more than half of the professionals that responded to the survey (53%) actively engaged in job-seeking activities during the 12 months prior to the survey. One out of every three professionals (32%) sought positions within the field or were seeking jobs both inside and outside of the field, and one out of every five professionals (21%) actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency. While job-seeking was quite common in the year leading up to the survey, when asked about intentions to remain employed in the coming year, 79% of professionals reported planning to remain in their current position (without seeking employment elsewhere).

In open-ended questions, professionals also discussed their intentions to leave (see "Toll on Workforce" in Appendix B3). Some professionals talked about leaving child welfare practice altogether or retiring, while others talked about leaving temporarily or moving to other units within the county. A few examples include:

"[I] will likely move to another job, but my soul has been damaged. We now have CP workers who want to be doing the work that we do and we need to find a way to keep us. Why stay in CP with all that goes with it (stress, home visits, threats, etc.) when another internal position opens up that pays the same?"

"I am going to be switching to adoption from the ongoing child protection I have been doing for 15+ years because the changes in paperwork have made the job I loved into one I hate. I used to have coworkers that generally had 5 - 15+ years experience working with me - now there is only one left with any experience and everyone else is new."

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study was conducted at a time of sweeping child protection reform in Minnesota. Reform by its very nature is a substantial and complex process, which often requires synchronizing many aspects of practice across jurisdictions while utilizing the expertise of key stakeholders to inform large-scale practice and policy changes. Unfortunately, child protection reform is often carried out in reaction to an adverse event (or series of events), such as the death of a child. While child protection reform is not unique to Minnesota or the United States, the process of reform continues to be challenging across jurisdictions around the world.

The perspectives presented within this report are insightful, especially when considered within the context of the child protection reform efforts being undertaken in Minnesota. While the findings do not offer a fully-comprehensive picture of the workforce (including equal coverage of the successes and challenges of all aspects of the work and workforce), they do provide a firm understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the child protection workforce within the bigger picture of system reform. Many of the findings of this study point to the fact that Minnesota's child protection workforce seems unwell, and that professionals within the workforce are not

getting the support they need. While this information may be difficult to face, the perceptions and experiences of the workforce are critical to consider in ongoing reform efforts, regardless of whether additional changes occur in legislative or organizational policies. Workforce well-being is crucial for ensuring workforce stability, successfully implementing policy changes and best practice, and most importantly, serving children and families in Minnesota.

While not every question included in the survey focused on Minnesota's child protection reform efforts, the overall experiences and perceptions of the workforce were likely influenced by these events. It is also important to note that child protection practice and policy in Minnesota (and other jurisdictions) are constantly evolving and changing as new research findings are revealed, the composition of our communities changes, and as new issues arise (e.g., increased addiction to opioids, mental health needs, etc.). The key findings of this report and our recommendations should be viewed not only within the context of statewide reform but also within the context of the continual changes that occur in child protection practice and policy. Thus, these findings remain relevant in the current reform context and beyond.

While the authors of this report do not wish to be alarmist, some of the findings of the current research are extremely concerning and suggest the need for intentional efforts to further support the workforce. Recommendations to address areas of concern and build upon the strengths of the workforce are presented below:

1. Intentional and urgent efforts to address the anticipated (and unanticipated) turnover expected within the workforce in the next five years is critical. The workforce is on the verge of losing a significant proportion of seasoned professionals who hold vast amounts of institutional knowledge and are well-prepared to address the needs of children and families with whom they work. Efforts to retain this institutional knowledge, prepare for and manage the needs of incoming workers (e.g., managing increased workload during training periods, need for mentoring, etc.), and critically evaluate and respond to the diversity of the workforce itself (e.g., recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce) are crucial to the stability of the child welfare system (Piescher, LaLiberte, & Lee, 2018).
2. Minnesota has a well-educated child welfare workforce (many of whom have backgrounds that prepared them specifically for child welfare work). Yet, the need for on-going, coordinated professional development remains, as does the need for foundational training of new professionals who join the child welfare workforce. Simply adding training is not the recommended solution. Rather, the authors of this report suggest that available training be critically reviewed and re-imagined to meet the ongoing and upcoming needs of the workforce. This is in keeping with the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children and the Legislative Task Force on Child Protection. Furthermore, this professional development cannot simply be made available to the workforce; rather, local agencies and the training system must collaborate in making training relevant and accessible for professionals actively carrying child welfare caseloads.
3. Tangible supports to both respond to and prevent secondary traumatic stress are necessary given the current experiences of the workforce. STS supports may include paid leave and reduced workload, among other options, but should be tailored to the needs of the individual and circumstance. Agency-level responses need to be provided without shame or retaliation, allowing professionals to feel safe and comfortable identifying struggles and concerns. Agency-level plans for addressing STS are essential (and are in keeping with recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children).
4. Including the voices of frontline and supervisory staff is imperative as Minnesota continues its work in child protection system reform and other system change efforts. Involvement by these professionals is needed when change occurs at the local practice level as well as at the legislative and/or statewide level. As noted in this report, professionals often find that both practice and policy changes are not clear, and that these changes can create barriers to doing the work effectively and efficiently. Although agencies may believe that they are adequately involving front-line professionals in decision-making efforts, the results of the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Study reveal that professionals are not satisfied with their involvement. Identifying opportunities to gather input from front-line professionals

from the initial conceptualization of practice and policy change throughout implementation can support change that is meaningful and manageable.

5. Professionals responding to the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Study overwhelmingly noted that the general population needs a better understanding of child protection. However, those individuals charged with developing and refining existing child protection practices and policies must also have a more nuanced and deeper grasp of the complex decisions that the workforce must attend to on a daily basis. This knowledge is critical to informing system-change efforts and must be considered to avoid making superficial change to processes that does not result in meaningful resolution of core issues. Underlying issues that may have significant impact on case process and family outcomes are often not easy to change or identify; these may include lack of funding, community misunderstanding, child protection's history of causing trauma (particularly in communities of color), ineffective strategies for social issues that many families in child protection face (e.g., poverty, mental and chemical health issues, mass incarceration, etc.), and a general lack of safety net for families.
6. Professionals reported a lack of satisfaction with communication at both the local and statewide level. Areas of dissatisfaction included communication about general practice and policy changes, as well as communication on broader reform efforts and child welfare activities taking place outside of their agencies (e.g., legislative changes). Improvements to communication are needed with respect to identifying core messaging (i.e., key aspects and specifics regarding practice and policy changes), developing and implementing consistent communication processes over and above those currently utilized, and bridging statewide and local communication efforts to provide uniform and tailored messaging and to facilitate meaningful integration of practice and policy changes into professionals' daily work.

Appendix A Methods

Participants

Front-line professionals and supervisors working in Minnesota’s state-supervised and county-administered child welfare system were invited to participate in the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The child welfare professionals were invited to complete an online survey delivered via email sent by each county’s director in February, 2016. County social service directors agreed to distribute the invitation while also encouraging participation. County directors were asked to report the number of child welfare professionals to whom they sent the invitation, resulting collectively in a sample size of 1,948 frontline and supervisory professionals working in child welfare (including child protection services, children’s mental health, foster care, adoption and permanency, prevention and early intervention services, and other related children’s services). A total of 862 child welfare professionals from 81 (of 87) counties responded to the survey, a 44% statewide response rate. Of the responses, 823 included complete information for most items contained within the survey.

Instrumentation

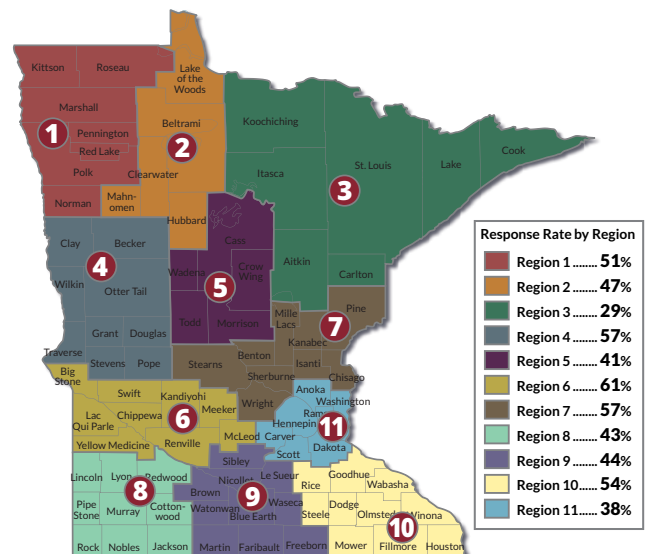
At the time of this survey, Minnesota was experiencing considerable practice and policy reform resulting in an increase in staff turnover across the state. Thus, the survey was designed to inform state and county agencies of the current condition of the workforce and to inform strategic development aimed at stabilizing the child welfare workforce and increasing employee retention. Developed by a team of researchers at the University of Minnesota, the online survey was informed by a comprehensive review of existing literature, including but not limited to research conducted by Ellett, Ellett & Rugutt (2003). The survey was presented to members of the Children’s Committee of the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and staff from the Child Safety and Permanency Division at the Minnesota Department of Human Services for review, modification, and adoption prior to implementation. The workforce survey consisted of 67 items, including: 10 demographic items, eight items on current agency role, 20 job

satisfaction items (including satisfaction with organizational issues, policy and program development, secondary traumatic stress, and supervision), 21 items on intent to remain employed (including one open-ended question), seven items on child protection reform, and one additional open-ended item for professionals to offer clarification to survey responses and/or supplementary information.

Analytic Plan

A regional framework, developed and utilized by MACSSA, served as the organizational framework for the current report. MACSSA’s framework divides the state’s 87 counties into 11 regions (Figure 1). This framework was selected due to its current use in the provision of social services in the state as well as for its ability to promote the protection of confidentiality for study participants. This is particularly true for smaller counties where confidentiality may be harder to ensure using other reporting methods.

Figure 1. Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey response rates by region



This report focuses on the responses of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota (n=734). While the responses of professionals working outside of these fields (e.g., children’s mental health, prevention and early intervention services, and other related

children's services) largely mirrored those working in child protection, the small sample size of this group (resulting in concerns about generalizability) limited their inclusion in subsequent analysis. Thus, these findings are not presented in this report.

Descriptive analysis was used to assess characteristics and perceptions of the workforce, both statewide and by region, for quantitative responses (see Appendix B1). Chi-square analysis was used to compare characteristics and perceptions of the workforce by factors of interest (e.g., role within the agency, educational background, etc.; see Appendix B2). All quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS 24.

Inductive thematic coding of qualitative (i.e., open-ended) responses was carried out using NVivo 11. Of the 330 qualitative responses provided, responses such as "no," "I don't know," and "NA" or "not applicable" were removed, resulting in substantive responses from a total of 286 professionals. Codes were inductively created from emerging themes and subcategories and organized per the number of professionals mentioning each theme. Foremost, we identified themes from responses to open-ended survey questions using emergent coding. That is, the main themes identified by the research team served as the initial codes and additional subcategories emerged during the coding process.

Appendix B1

Child Protection Regional and Statewide Quantitative Findings

Workforce Demography

The status of Minnesota's child welfare workforce has not been well understood because Minnesota operates under a county-administered, state-supervised structure. Thus, a key area of focus for the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Survey was the demography of the workforce. A summary of key findings is presented in narrative; additional details can be found in Table 1 below.

Personal Characteristics

The majority of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency who responded to the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (85%). These professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (90%). Of professionals who responded to the survey, only 4% identified as Native American, 3% African American, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Hispanic/Latino/Latina, 1% Hmong, and 1% Somali. The workforce included professionals of color in eight of the 11 regions, with the proportion of professionals of color being highest in regions with significantly-sized metropolitan areas (e.g., Regions 3, 10, and 11) or American Indian communities (e.g., Region 2). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (87%), with the proportion of females in each region ranging from 79-100%. The largest proportions of professionals identifying as male in the workforce were found in the more populous regions. The age distribution of the child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency workforce was much more normalized across regions. Twenty-three percent of professionals responding to this survey reported being 30 years or younger, and 12% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions was aged 25 or younger, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement. In fact, one out

of every five professionals surveyed stated they will retire within the next 10 years, with more than half of all retirements occurring within the next five years.

Educational Background

A large proportion of Minnesota's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (37%). More than half of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (56%), with 32% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 24% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work, tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training. In fact, 60% of professionals responding to the survey in Region 11 reported that they had earned a master's degree. Statewide, one out of every six professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs, ranging from 6% to 24% across regions.

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (47%) of Minnesota's workforce has been in the child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency field for nine or more years (with 28% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 30% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less. Geographically, the most tenured workforce was concentrated in the northwest (Regions 1 and 2), north central (Region 5), and Twin Cities metro (Region 11) regions; in these regions more than half of all professionals had been in the field for nine or more years. The least tenured workforce was concentrated in the west and southwest regions (Regions 4, 6, 8, and 9), where approximately one out of every three workers had less than two years of experience.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by professionals indicate that Minnesota has a quite experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. One out of every four professionals (23%) in

Minnesota's child protection system had been in his/her current position for less than one year, and almost half of all professionals (44%) had been in their current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. This is especially true in Regions 6 and 11 where approximately one out of every three professionals had been in his/her current position less

than one year and almost half of all professionals had a tenure of two years or less in their current position. On the other hand, 21% of professionals responding to the survey statewide had been in their current position for 13 or more years; and, in Regions 5 and 9 more than one third of professionals had been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 1.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Demography

Region	Statewide N=734*	R1 N=19	R2 N=23	R3 N=58	R4 N=54	R5 N=33	R6 N=48	R7 N=111	R8 N=19	R9 N=34	R10 N=108	R11 N=227
Race (n=733)												
White	663 (90.3%)	19 (100.0%)	19 (82.6%)	52 (9.7%)	51 (94.4%)	31 (93.9%)	47 (97.9%)	104 (93.7%)	19 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	97 (89.8%)	190 (83.7%)
Professional of Color	71 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (17.4%)	6 (10.3%)	3 (5.6%)	2 (6.1%)	1 (2.1%)	7 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (10.2%)	37 (16.3%)
Position (n=734)												
Supervisor	110 (15.0%)	4 (21.1%)	3 (13.0%)	11 (19.0%)	6 (11.1%)	6 (18.2%)	10 (20.8%)	17 (15.3%)	2 (10.5%)	5 (14.7%)	17 (15.7%)	29 (12.8%)
Front-Line	624 (85.0%)	15 (78.9%)	20 (87.0%)	47 (81.0%)	48 (88.9%)	27 (81.8%)	38 (79.2%)	94 (84.7%)	17 (89.5%)	29 (85.3%)	91 (84.3%)	198 (87.2%)
Gender (n=732)												
Male	94 (12.8%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (17.4%)	12 (20.7%)	5 (9.3%)	4 (12.1%)	1 (2.1%)	11 (9.9%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (5.9%)	17 (15.9%)	36 (15.9%)
Female	638 (86.9%)	19 (100.0%)	19 (82.6%)	46 (79.3%)	49 (90.7%)	29 (87.9%)	47 (97.9%)	100 (90.1%)	17 (89.5%)	32 (94.1%)	90 (84.1%)	190 (84.1%)
Age (n=734)												
20-25	49 (6.7%)	3 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)	8 (14.8%)	5 (15.2%)	5 (10.4%)	8 (7.2%)	2 (10.5%)	4 (11.8%)	4 (3.7%)	9 (4.0%)
26-30	120 (16.3%)	3 (15.8%)	5 (21.7%)	10 (17.2%)	8 (14.8%)	4 (12.1%)	8 (16.7%)	16 (14.4%)	3 (15.8%)	7 (20.6%)	16 (14.8%)	40 (17.6%)
31-35	117 (15.9%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (13.0%)	10 (17.2%)	11 (20.4%)	3 (9.1%)	13 (27.1%)	19 (17.1%)	5 (26.3%)	2 (5.9%)	20 (18.5%)	30 (13.2%)
36-40	105 (14.3%)	2 (10.5%)	4 (17.4%)	7 (12.1%)	8 (14.8%)	7 (21.2%)	3 (6.3%)	22 (19.8%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (8.8%)	15 (13.9%)	33 (14.5%)
41-45	104 (14.2%)	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (10.3%)	5 (9.3%)	2 (6.1%)	4 (8.3%)	14 (12.6%)	4 (21.1%)	10 (29.4%)	21 (19.4%)	36 (15.9%)
46-50	83 (11.3%)	4 (21.1%)	2 (8.7%)	3 (5.2%)	4 (7.4%)	3 (9.1%)	7 (14.6%)	13 (11.7%)	1 (5.3%)	4 (11.8%)	12 (11.1%)	30 (13.2%)
51-55	68 (9.3%)	2 (10.5%)	3 (13.0%)	8 (13.8%)	5 (9.3%)	2 (6.1%)	5 (10.4%)	5 (4.5%)	1 (5.3%)	2 (5.9%)	10 (9.3%)	25 (11.0%)
56-60	52 (7.1%)	2 (10.5%)	6 (26.1%)	5 (8.6%)	2 (3.7%)	6 (18.2%)	1 (2.1%)	9 (8.1%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (5.9%)	4 (3.7%)	13 (5.7%)
Over 60	36 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (13.8%)	3 (5.6%)	1 (3.0%)	2 (4.2%)	5 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.6%)	11 (4.8%)
Retirement (n=734)												
In <10 years	159 (21.7%)	5 (26.3%)	7 (30.4%)	18 (31.0%)	11 (20.4%)	10 (30.3%)	8 (16.7%)	21 (18.9%)	1 (5.3%)	6 (17.6%)	19 (17.6%)	53 (23.3%)
Within 5 years	89 (12.1%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (8.7%)	12 (20.7%)	9 (16.7%)	8 (24.2%)	5 (10.4%)	10 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.8%)	11 (10.2%)	27 (11.9%)

Graduate Degree (n=715)												
	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
	265 (37.1%)	2 (10.5%)	4 (19.0%)	25 (44.6%)	11 (20.4%)	1 (3.2%)	2 (4.3%)	30 (28.0%)	4 (22.2%)	13 (38.2%)	39 (36.8%)	134 (58.6%)
Highest Social Work Degree (n=734)												
No SW Degree	323 (44.0%)	9 (47.4%)	20 (87.0%)	34 (58.6%)	15 (27.8%)	15 (45.5%)	19 (39.6%)	49 (44.1%)	7 (36.8%)	22 (64.7%)	44 (40.7%)	89 (39.2%)
BSW	235 (32.0%)	9 (47.0%)	2 (8.7%)	7 (12.1%)	34 (63.0%)	17 (51.5%)	28 (58.3%)	43 (38.7%)	9 (47.4%)	7 (20.6%)	42 (38.9%)	37 (16.3%)
MSW	176 (24.0%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (4.3%)	17 (29.3%)	5 (9.3%)	1 (3.0%)	1 (2.1%)	19 (17.1%)	3 (15.8%)	5 (14.7%)	22 (20.4%)	101 (44.5%)
IV-E Alumni (n=714)												
	111 (15.5%)	1 (5.9%)	2 (9.5%)	13 (23.2%)	13 (24.1%)	3 (9.7%)	3 (6.4%)	15 (14.0%)	1 (5.6%)	3 (8.8%)	17 (16.0%)	40 (17.9%)
CP Tenure (n=734)												
< 1 yr	110 (15.0%)	2 (10.5%)	1 (4.3%)	5 (8.6%)	8 (14.8%)	4 (12.1%)	12 (25.0%)	9 (8.1%)	4 (21.1%)	5 (14.7%)	19 (17.6%)	41 (18.1%)
1-2 yrs	108 (14.7%)	2 (10.5%)	5 (21.7%)	10 (17.2%)	11 (20.4%)	5 (15.2%)	5 (10.4%)	18 (16.2%)	3 (15.8%)	6 (17.6%)	12 (11.1%)	31 (13.7%)
3-4 yrs	85 (11.6%)	3 (15.8%)	1 (4.3%)	6 (10.3%)	8 (14.8%)	5 (15.2%)	7 (14.6%)	15 (13.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (11.8%)	16 (14.8%)	20 (8.8%)
5-6 yrs	55 (7.5%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (8.7%)	5 (8.6%)	4 (7.4%)	2 (6.1%)	3 (6.3%)	10 (9.0%)	3 (15.8%)	2 (5.9%)	11 (10.2%)	11 (4.8%)
7-8 yrs	34 (4.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (8.7%)	4 (6.9%)	5 (9.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.3%)	9 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.6%)	5 (2.2%)
9-10 yrs	52 (7.1%)	1 (5.3%)	5 (21.7%)	5 (8.6%)	2 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	14 (12.6%)	3 (15.8%)	1 (2.9%)	9 (8.3%)	10 (4.4%)
11-12 yrs	29 (4.0%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (4.3%)	5 (8.6%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (3.0%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (1.8%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (2.9%)	3 (2.8%)	10 (4.4%)
13-15 yrs	53 (7.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.2%)	3 (5.6%)	3 (9.1%)	1 (2.1%)	10 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.8%)	3 (2.8%)	27 (11.9%)
> 15 yrs	208 (28.3%)	8 (42.1%)	6 (26.1%)	15 (25.9%)	12 (22.2%)	13 (39.4%)	11 (22.9%)	24 (21.6%)	5 (26.3%)	12 (35.3%)	30 (27.8%)	72 (31.7%)
Tenure in Current Position (n=734)												
< 1 yr	170 (23.2%)	2 (10.5%)	4 (17.4%)	8 (13.8%)	11 (20.4%)	6 (18.2%)	16 (33.3%)	16 (14.4%)	5 (26.3%)	7 (20.6%)	28 (25.9%)	67 (29.5%)
1-2 yrs	152 (20.7%)	3 (15.8%)	5 (21.7%)	16 (27.6%)	13 (24.1%)	4 (12.1%)	7 (14.6%)	33 (29.7%)	2 (10.5%)	8 (23.5%)	17 (15.7%)	44 (19.4%)
3-4 yrs	99 (13.5%)	4 (21.1%)	3 (13.0%)	7 (12.1%)	9 (16.7%)	5 (15.2%)	9 (18.8%)	14 (12.6%)	1 (5.3%)	4 (11.8%)	16 (14.8%)	27 (11.9%)
5-6 yrs	49 (6.7%)	2 (10.5%)	3 (13.0%)	7 (12.1%)	2 (3.7%)	1 (3.0%)	3 (6.3%)	6 (5.4%)	4 (21.1%)	1 (2.9%)	11 (10.2%)	9 (4.0%)
7-8 yrs	43 (5.9%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (13.0%)	4 (6.9%)	8 (14.8%)	1 (3.0%)	1 (2.1%)	14 (12.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.8%)	8 (3.5%)
9-10 yrs	45 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (3.7%)	3 (9.1%)	1 (2.1%)	11 (9.9%)	2 (10.5%)	1 (2.9%)	7 (6.5%)	15 (6.6%)
11-12 yrs	20 (2.7%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.4%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (3.0%)	3 (6.3%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (10.5%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (1.9%)	6 (2.6%)
13-15 yrs	40 (5.4%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.2%)	2 (3.7%)	3 (9.1%)	1 (2.1%)	2 (1.8%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (8.8%)	2 (1.9%)	22 (9.7%)
> 15 yrs	116 (15.8%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (13.0%)	10 (17.2%)	6 (11.1%)	9 (27.3%)	7 (14.6%)	14 (12.6%)	2 (10.5%)	9 (26.5%)	22 (20.4%)	29 (12.8%)

***Note.** Statewide response rates to each survey item did not always coincide with the overall survey response rate (N=734); for clarity, both the statewide survey response rate and the survey item response rate are provided. Race and ethnicity is not reported by region to maintain confidentiality of professionals.

Job Satisfaction

Although the majority of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their jobs, one out of every three professionals reported dissatisfaction (see Table 2). Dissatisfaction rates rose to 40% in three Minnesota regions (including Regions 4, 7, and 11), and more than half of professionals in Region 3 (53%) expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). One out of every three professionals (36%) reported that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, regional variation was evident. Professionals working in the western and southeast regions of Minnesota reported the highest rates of satisfaction regarding input into decision-making whereas more than half of professionals working in the Twin

Cities metro region reported dissatisfaction with input into decision-making (56%). Professionals overwhelmingly (96%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from professionals' responses. Statewide, more than half of all professionals (58%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and a third of all professionals (36%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, two thirds of all professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (ranging from 57-83% across regions).

Table 2.
Job Satisfaction of the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce (n=734)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	492 (66.7%)	13 (68.5%)	18 (78.3%)	27 (46.6%)	33 (61.1%)	25 (75.8%)	40 (83.3%)	69 (62.2%)	14 (73.7%)	25 (73.5%)	86 (79.6%)	138 (60.8%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	466 (63.5%)	17 (89.5%)	18 (78.3%)	38 (65.5%)	41 (75.9%)	23 (69.7%)	37 (77.1%)	66 (59.5%)	16 (84.2%)	21 (61.8%)	89 (82.4%)	100 (44.1%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	426 (58.0%)	13 (68.4%)	15 (65.2%)	38 (65.5%)	38 (70.4%)	18 (54.5%)	32 (66.7%)	59 (53.2%)	13 (68.4%)	17 (50.0%)	58 (53.7%)	125 (55.1%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	261 (35.6%)	10 (52.6%)	10 (43.5%)	29 (50.0%)	21 (38.9%)	12 (36.4%)	27 (56.3%)	39 (35.1%)	5 (26.3%)	10 (29.4%)	37 (34.3%)	61 (26.9%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	705 (96.0%)	18 (94.7%)	23 (100.0%)	54 (93.1%)	53 (98.1%)	33 (100.0%)	47 (98.0%)	107 (96.4%)	19 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	107 (99.1%)	210 (92.5%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	499 (68.0%)	15 (78.9%)	16 (69.6%)	47 (81.0%)	45 (83.3%)	20 (60.6%)	36 (75.0%)	82 (73.9%)	14 (73.7%)	24 (70.6%)	62 (57.4%)	138 (60.8%)

Note. Numbers presented in the table reflect the proportion of professionals that responded with agreement to each item

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often informally referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Minnesota, the vast majority of professionals (83%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every three professionals

reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job (see Table 3). While experience of STS was generally consistent across the state, negative effects of STS were more varied across regions (ranging from 22-47%), with the most negative effects seen in central Minnesota. Of great concern for Minnesota is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. More than one third of professionals (37%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS (ranging from 53-78% across regions, but particularly high in Regions 4, 9, and 11).

Table 3.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of Secondary Traumatic Stress

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=716)	595 (83.1%)	15 (83.3%)	19 (86.4%)	49 (87.5%)	40 (76.9%)	28 (84.8%)	41 (87.2%)	94 (85.5%)	14 (77.8%)	27 (84.4%)	84 (78.5%)	184 (83.3%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=684)	254 (37.1%)	7 (41.2%)	7 (35.0%)	21 (39.6%)	23 (46.9%)	12 (38.7%)	10 (22.2%)	45 (42.5%)	6 (33.3%)	11 (35.5%)	28 (26.4%)	84 (40.2%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=684)	430 (62.9%)	12 (70.6%)	13 (61.9%)	35 (66.0%)	29 (56.9%)	19 (63.3%)	34 (77.3%)	68 (66.0%)	14 (77.8%)	16 (53.3%)	73 (69.5%)	117 (55.2%)

Note. Numbers presented in the table reflect the proportion of professionals that responded with agreement to each item

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that the vast majority of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota (78%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received (ranging from 64-91% across regions; see Table 4). Satisfaction with supervision was highest in western and southeastern Minnesota, and lowest in northeastern Minnesota. Professionals consistently reported that their supervisors trusted

their decision-making and abilities (94%), and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (90%). In addition, three-fourths of professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services (ranging from 62-91%). However, half of all professionals reported their supervision centered on administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance (ranging from 34-58%).

Table 4.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of Supervision (n=734)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	571 (77.8%)	15 (78.9%)	20 (87.0%)	37 (63.8%)	49 (90.7%)	29 (87.9%)	42 (87.5%)	76 (68.5%)	14 (73.7%)	26 (76.5%)	93 (86.1%)	170 (74.9%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	350 (47.7%)	11 (57.9%)	8 (34.8%)	29 (50.0%)	24 (44.4%)	16 (48.5%)	22 (45.8%)	60 (54.1%)	9 (47.4%)	19 (55.9%)	37 (34.3%)	115 (50.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	690 (94.0%)	16 (84.2%)	22 (95.7%)	55 (94.8%)	54 (100.0%)	32 (97.0%)	45 (93.8%)	104 (93.7%)	19 (100.0%)	33 (97.1%)	99 (91.7%)	211 (93.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	657 (89.5%)	17 (89.5%)	22 (95.7%)	51 (87.9%)	53 (98.1%)	31 (93.9%)	47 (97.9%)	90 (81.1%)	18 (94.7%)	30 (88.2%)	100 (92.6%)	198 (87.2%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	570 (77.7%)	14 (73.7%)	21 (91.3%)	39 (67.2%)	49 (90.7%)	30 (90.9%)	39 (81.3%)	79 (71.2%)	16 (84.2%)	21 (61.8%)	96 (88.9%)	166 (73.1%)

Note. Numbers presented in the table reflect the proportion of professionals that responded with agreement to each item

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Overwhelmingly, professionals across the state (95%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose (see Table 5). In addition, most professionals (62%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities (with least opportunity in Regions 7 and 11). On the topic of policy, half of all professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new

programs and policies in their agencies (ranging from 35-74% across regions, with lowest levels reported in Regions 7 and 11). However, the majority of professionals (59%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance (ranging from 27-74% across regions), with half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (ranging from 41-64%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (78%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem (ranging from 63-88% across regions).

Table 5.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of Agency Policies, Processes, and Attitudes (n=734)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	430 (58.6%)	11 (57.9%)	14 (60.9%)	43 (74.1%)	34 (63.0%)	24 (72.7%)	24 (50.0%)	62 (55.9%)	13 (68.4%)	9 (26.5%)	50 (46.3%)	146 (64.3%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	453 (61.7%)	15 (78.9%)	16 (69.6%)	34 (58.6%)	37 (68.5%)	22 (66.7%)	38 (79.2%)	55 (49.5%)	18 (94.7%)	20 (58.8%)	79 (73.1%)	119 (52.4%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	159 (21.7%)	3 (15.8%)	7 (30.4%)	7 (12.1%)	9 (16.7%)	7 (21.2%)	15 (31.3%)	18 (16.2%)	7 (36.8%)	12 (35.3%)	37 (34.3%)	37 (16.3%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	388 (52.9%)	10 (52.6%)	11 (47.8%)	29 (50.0%)	24 (44.4%)	21 (63.6%)	29 (60.4%)	60 (54.1%)	10 (52.6%)	14 (41.2%)	53 (49.1%)	127 (55.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	365 (49.7%)	14 (73.7%)	13 (56.5%)	34 (58.6%)	30 (55.6%)	23 (69.7%)	34 (70.8%)	43 (38.7%)	9 (47.4%)	17 (50.0%)	70 (64.8%)	78 (34.4%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	700 (95.4%)	18 (94.7%)	23 (100.0%)	55 (94.8%)	52 (96.3%)	32 (97.0%)	47 (97.9%)	102 (91.9%)	18 (94.7%)	34 (100.0%)	104 (96.3%)	215 (94.7%)

Note. Numbers presented in the table reflect the proportion of professionals that responded with agreement to each item

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

Results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months more than half of all professionals (53%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in

which they currently worked (see Table 6). In fact, 21% of all professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. One out of every three professionals (32%) sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below. While job seeking was prevalent across the state, more concentrated job seeking occurred in some regions (e.g., Regions 7, 8, and 11 where approximately 60% of all professionals engaged in job seeking in the past 12 months).

Table 6.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Job Seeking in the Past 12 Months (n=720)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Stayers	338 (46.9%)	9 (47.4%)	16 (69.6%)	35 (60.3%)	24 (44.4%)	17 (51.5%)	26 (56.5%)	44 (41.5%)	7 (36.8%)	16 (47.1%)	53 (50.5%)	91 (40.8%)
Movers	233 (32.4%)	7 (36.8%)	4 (17.4%)	9 (15.5%)	14 (25.9%)	8 (24.2%)	11 (23.9%)	42 (39.6%)	7 (36.8%)	13 (38.2%)	32 (30.5%)	86 (38.6%)
Leavers	149 (20.7%)	3 (15.8%)	3 (13.0%)	14 (24.1%)	16 (29.6%)	8 (24.2%)	9 (19.6%)	20 (18.9%)	5 (26.3%)	5 (14.7%)	20 (19.0%)	46 (20.6%)

Results of the survey revealed that the majority of professionals (83%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months (ranging 74-100% across regions; see Table 7). Across the state, 7% of all professionals intended to move to a new position within the field and 10% intended to move to a new position outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency. Professionals intending to move to a new position were most concentrated in Regions 2, 7, and 11, whereas professionals intending

to leave the field altogether were concentrated in Regions 3, 4, and 5; in these regions one out of every five professionals intended to leave child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency. However, this planned intent to leave does not factor in planned retirements; these upcoming retirements will have a dramatic impact on the stability of the workforce in the coming years (as previously described earlier in this appendix).

Table 7.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Job Seeking Intentions in the Upcoming 12 Months (n=700)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Stayers	581 (83.0%)	16 (100.0%)	19 (82.6%)	44 (80.0%)	40 (74.1%)	26 (78.8%)	39 (88.6%)	88 (85.4%)	17 (94.4%)	30 (88.2%)	90 (87.4%)	172 (79.3%)
Movers	47 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (1.8%)	4 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.5%)	10 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (4.9%)	22 (10.1%)
Leavers	72 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (8.7%)	10 (18.2%)	10 (18.5%)	7 (21.2%)	3 (6.8%)	5 (4.9%)	1 (5.6%)	3 (8.8%)	8 (7.8%)	23 (10.6%)

Factors that professionals identified as being important for retention varied significantly across regions; however, the top three factors identified statewide

were increased salary (88%), lower caseloads (81%), and fewer administrative requirements (81%; see Table 8).

Table 8.
Factors Identified by Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce as Important for Retention (n=720)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Different work hours	265 (36.8%)	6 (31.6%)	13 (56.5%)	11 (19.0%)	20 (37.0%)	8 (24.2%)	27 (58.7%)	41 (38.7%)	8 (42.1%)	10 (29.4%)	36 (34.3%)	85 (38.1%)
Increased salary	636 (88.3%)	19 (100.0%)	18 (78.3%)	48 (82.8%)	45 (83.3%)	26 (78.8%)	45 (97.8%)	97 (91.5%)	18 (94.7%)	32 (94.1%)	88 (83.8%)	200 (89.7%)
Lower caseload	586 (81.4%)	15 (78.9%)	18 (78.3%)	44 (75.9%)	48 (88.9%)	25 (75.8%)	41 (89.1%)	90 (84.9%)	18 (94.7%)	27 (79.4%)	83 (79.0%)	177 (79.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	582 (80.8%)	17 (89.5%)	16 (69.6%)	52 (89.7%)	44 (81.5%)	28 (84.8%)	41 (89.1%)	88 (83.0%)	13 (68.4%)	27 (79.4%)	85 (81.0%)	171 (76.7%)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Increased frequency or length of supervision	231 (32.1%)	6 (31.6%)	5 (21.7%)	21 (36.2%)	13 (24.1%)	9 (27.3%)	14 (30.4%)	36 (34.0%)	6 (31.6%)	9 (26.5%)	39 (37.1%)	73 (32.7%)
Higher quality supervision	300 (41.7%)	6 (31.6%)	5 (21.7%)	26 (44.8%)	18 (33.3%)	13 (39.4%)	12 (26.1%)	53 (50.0%)	8 (42.1%)	16 (47.1%)	39 (37.1%)	104 (46.6%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	443 (61.5%)	9 (47.4%)	11 (47.8%)	39 (67.2%)	30 (55.6%)	21 (63.6%)	27 (58.7%)	67 (63.2%)	12 (63.2%)	19 (55.9%)	63 (60.0%)	145 (65.0%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	446 (61.9%)	14 (73.7%)	13 (56.5%)	36 (62.1%)	24 (44.4%)	19 (57.6%)	27 (58.7%)	70 (66.0%)	11 (57.9%)	22 (64.7%)	55 (52.4%)	155 (69.5%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	470 (65.3%)	14 (73.7%)	18 (78.3%)	35 (60.3%)	37 (68.5%)	22 (66.7%)	33 (71.7%)	78 (73.6%)	12 (63.2%)	25 (73.5%)	62 (59.0%)	134 (60.1%)
Additional professional development opportunities	514 (71.4%)	15 (78.9%)	17 (73.9%)	37 (63.8%)	34 (63.0%)	22 (66.7%)	37 (80.4%)	89 (84.0%)	14 (73.7%)	25 (73.5%)	73 (69.5%)	151 (67.7%)

Note. Numbers presented in the table reflect the proportion of professionals that responded with agreement to each item

Child Protection Reform

Overall, professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota (see Table 9). In fact, 84% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota (ranging from 72-96% across regions) and 74% of professionals were aware of *specific elements* of the reform *and* its resulting impact on their practice (ranging from 66-91% across regions).

Generally, professionals reported being more satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 66% of professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform (ranging from 49-83% across regions), only 35% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes (ranging from 24-44% across regions). Importantly, half of all professionals in the Twin

Cities metro region expressed dissatisfaction with communication provided by their agencies and three quarters of these same professionals expressed dissatisfaction with communication provided by DHS.

A majority of professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (65%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process. Professionals working in Regions 6 and 10 reported higher levels of advocacy, while professionals working in the Twin Cities metro region reported the lowest levels of advocacy (54% reported agency advocacy on behalf of the workforce and 57% reported advocacy on behalf of children and families).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, professionals overwhelmingly (94%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work. These sentiments were shared across all regions.

Table 9.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of Reform Efforts

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=717)	605 (84.4%)	13 (72.2%)	22 (95.7%)	51 (89.5%)	47 (87.0%)	30 (90.9%)	41 (89.1%)	93 (87.7%)	18 (94.7%)	27 (79.4%)	82 (78.1%)	181 (81.5%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=718)	528 (73.5%)	13 (72.2%)	21 (91.3%)	43 (75.4%)	43 (79.6%)	26 (78.8%)	37 (80.4%)	80 (75.5%)	16 (84.2%)	23 (67.6%)	69 (65.7%)	157 (70.4%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=716)	247 (34.5%)	5 (27.8%)	10 (43.5%)	17 (29.8%)	13 (24.1%)	14 (42.4%)	15 (32.6%)	46 (43.4%)	8 (42.1%)	15 (44.1%)	41 (39.4%)	63 (28.4%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=718)	473 (65.9%)	14 (77.8%)	19 (82.6%)	37 (64.9%)	40 (74.1%)	27 (81.8%)	37 (80.4%)	68 (64.2%)	15 (78.9%)	25 (73.5%)	82 (78.1%)	109 (48.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=715)	466 (65.2%)	12 (66.7%)	16 (69.6%)	40 (70.2%)	36 (67.9%)	21 (63.6%)	37 (80.4%)	68 (64.2%)	13 (68.4%)	22 (64.7%)	81 (77.9%)	120 (54.1%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=716)	496 (69.3%)	15 (83.3%)	18 (78.3%)	41 (71.9%)	39 (73.6%)	24 (72.7%)	38 (82.6%)	74 (69.8%)	14 (73.7%)	24 (70.6%)	82 (78.1%)	127 (57.2%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=718)	678 (94.4%)	14 (77.8%)	22 (95.7%)	56 (98.2%)	53 (98.1%)	32 (97.0%)	43 (93.5%)	102 (96.2%)	19 (100.0%)	31 (91.2%)	96 (91.4%)	210 (94.2%)

Note. Numbers presented in the table reflect the proportion of professionals that responded with agreement to each item

Appendix B2

Quantitative Comparison Findings

The Role of Title IV-E Education and Training

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides funding to support the recruitment and retention of a workforce specifically trained to serve children in out-of-home care and their families. Minnesota has a long history of providing specialized education and training for professionals entering the child protection workforce via Title IV-E State-University partnerships. In these partnerships, universities provide specialized education and training to students in public BSW and MSW programs across the state. While the specific universities providing the specialized education and training have changed over time (with regard to programmatic structure, degree level, number of students, etc.), the education and training these programs provide help to prepare students for careers in child protection. The goal of Title IV-E education and training programs is to provide financial support and educational resources to students committed to a career in public or tribal child welfare. All Title IV-E graduates are obligated to search for, accept, and remain employed in a public or tribal child welfare agency upon completion of their degree. The length of employment obligation is equal to the amount of time graduates were supported as students.

Not all professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster, adoption, and permanency are graduates of Title IV-E education and training programs. In an effort to understand differences in the characteristics, experiences, and perceptions of professionals in the field, we compared Title IV-E alumni with those entering the workforce from other programs using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic characteristics.

Title IV-E alumni were more likely to work in a supervisory role, identify as a professional of color, and have a graduate level degree (including MSW degree attainment) than professionals from other educational programs.

Job satisfaction.

In comparison to professionals from other educational programs, a larger proportion of Title IV-E alumni reported experiencing secondary traumatic stress while carrying out their job duties. They were also more likely to indicate that the supervision they received centers around administrative aspects (including monitoring and compliance) and note that they cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies.

Job seeking (past 12 months).

Title IV-E alumni were more likely to seek employment in another agency in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (i.e., be **movers**) while professionals from other educational programs were more likely to report no job seeking activities.

Intention to stay (next 12 months).

As compared to professionals from other educational backgrounds, Title IV-E alumni were more likely to report intentions to move to another agency within public or tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency in a different agency (DHS, Tribal, County) in the next 12 months. Title IV-E alumni were also more likely to report that increasing the frequency and/or length of supervision would increase their likelihood of remaining in their current positions.

Child protection reform.

Compared to professionals from other educational programs, Title IV-E alumni were more likely to be aware of specific elements of the proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota and impact on their practice.

Professionals of Color

Historically, the majority of child protection social workers have tended to be White. While increased racial/ethnic diversity has been evident in more recent years, the workforce remains largely non-Hispanic White and unrepresentative of the racial and ethnic identities of children and families served in CPS.

According to data from the National Survey of Child Adolescent Well-Being II, approximately 58% of child welfare caseworkers identified themselves as non-Hispanic White; 24% identified as African American, 15% identified as Hispanic, and 4% identified as another other race and/or ethnicity (Dolan, Smith, Casanueva, & Rigneisen, 2011).

Having a racially and ethnically diverse child protection workforce allows for the potential for more critical analysis and the identification of bias that exists or could exist (Leung, Cheung, & Stevenson, 1994). In addition, child protection workers who share or understand the culture or language of families from diverse backgrounds may have a better understanding of the family's background and needs (Dettlaf & Rycraft, 2010; Gelman, 2004; Weaver, 1999). Taken together, having a racially and ethnically diverse child protection workforce enhances their collective ability to be receptive to different traditions and ideas, resulting in better serving and protecting people across a variety of cultures and communities (Leung, Cheung, & Stevenson, 1994).

Research conducted at the University of Minnesota revealed that approximately 15% of Minnesota's population identified as people of color in 2016, while over 40% of all alleged victims in Minnesota's child protection system identified as children of color (Piescher, LaLiberte & Lee, 2018). The 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Study revealed that less than 10% of the CPS workforce identified as professionals of color during this same period. The proportion of the CPS workforce identifying as people of color equaled that of the population of children served in four of Minnesota's 11 regions (including Regions 3, 4, 5, and 10; Piescher et al., 2018).

In an effort to understand differences in the characteristics, experiences, and perceptions of professionals in the field, we compared data provided by professionals of color working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption with data provided by white professionals using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic characteristics.

Professionals of color were more likely to work in Region 11, be a graduate of a Title IV-E education and training program, and have a graduate degree (and an MSW degree in particular) than their White peers.

Job satisfaction.

As compared to their peers, professionals of color were **less** likely to 1) be satisfied with their job as it currently is, 2) believe that they had sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which they worked, 3) believe they have a positive impact on the lives of their clients, 4) perceive they had the support needed to manage their secondary traumatic stress, and 5) perceive that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies. As compared to their peers, professionals of color were **more** likely to 1) perceive the supervision they received as being centered around administrative monitoring as opposed to support or education, 2) believe that professional development opportunities and activities provided by their agency were adequate/sufficient to enhance their ability to do their job, and 3) believe that if explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to them, they would be better able to carry out their job duties and responsibilities.

Job seeking (past 12 months).

Professionals of color did not significantly differ from their peers with regard to their job seeking activities in the past 12 months.

Intention to stay (next 12 months).

Professionals of color were more likely to seek employment in public or tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency in a different agency (DHS, Tribal, County), and seek employment outside of the field in the next 12 months than their peers. Factors that would help to specifically retain professionals of color included receiving higher quality supervision, better communication about policy and practice changes, and additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes.

Child protection reform.

As compared to their peers, professionals of color were less likely to report satisfaction with communication from the leadership in their agency about proposed changes in child protection, and less likely to report that their agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce or the children and families served in the current child protection reform process.

Agency Role – Supervisors vs. Frontline Staff

Supervisors and frontline staff play critical and often-times complementary roles in the provision of services in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency, especially when considering organizational and governmental policy. Power differentials between these groups in efforts to make policy change and provide services to children and families may affect opinions and perceptions of the work and the work environment. In addition, the requirements of each of these roles are often quite different from one another and may further affect the opinions and perceptions of the work and the work environment.

To better understand these potential differences, we compared responses provided by supervisors with those of frontline staff using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic characteristics.

Supervisors were more likely to be a graduate of a Title IV-E education and training program, have a graduate degree (an MSW, in particular), have worked in the field for nine or more years, and be older (aged 46 years or more) than frontline staff.

Job satisfaction.

As compared to frontline staff, supervisors were **more** likely to 1) believe that they had sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which they worked, 2) feel overwhelmed by their job duties, 3) perceive that frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on their job performance, 4) believe that professional development opportunities and activities provided by their agency were adequate/sufficient to enhance their ability to do their job, and 5) perceive that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies. As compared to frontline staff, supervisors were **less** likely to feel afraid for their personal safety due to the nature of their work.

Job seeking (past 12 months).

As compared to frontline staff, supervisors were more likely to have **not** looked for a new job (i.e., be **stayers**) in the past 12 months. Frontline staff were more likely to have looked for positions within child protection,

involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency as well as outside of the field during this period (i.e. be **movers** and **leavers**).

Intention to stay (next 12 months).

While supervisors were more likely to plan on retiring in the next 10 years, their intentions to remain employed in their current position did not differ from frontline staff. Factors that would help to retain supervisors and frontline staff were not significantly different from one another with the exception of salary; frontline staff were more likely to believe that having an increased salary would increase their likelihood of staying in their current positions over the next 12 months.

Child protection reform.

As compared to frontline staff, supervisors were more likely to report that they were 1) generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place, and 2) aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms and how those would impact their practice.

Social Work Degree Attainment

Many educational pathways exist to becoming a professional in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. Some pathways include social work, while others include related areas such as psychology, sociology, public health, family studies, and child development, to name a few. While similarities exist across these educational pathways, social work programs may uniquely prepare professionals for work in these fields because of their focus on core aspects of practice, including assessment, engagement, and service planning in addition to their requisite field practicum.

Professionals working in the field may have varied experiences and opinions about the workforce, career options, and professional advancement based on their educational preparation and training. In an effort to understand potential differences, we compared data provided by professionals with a Bachelors in Social Work (BSW) degree, those with a Master's of Social Work (MSW) degree, and those with a Non-Social Work (non-SW) degree using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic characteristics.

Professionals holding a BSW were more likely to be aged 20-25, while professionals holding a non-SW degree were more likely to be aged 60 years or older. Professionals having a degree outside of social work were also more likely to be supervisors. Professionals with an MSW were more likely to be professionals of color than those with other degrees. Professionals with an MSW were also more likely to come from educational programs supported by Title IV-E funds than their peers.

Job satisfaction.

Professionals with MSW degrees were less likely to report being satisfied with their job as it currently is, while those with non-SW or BSW degrees were more likely to report satisfaction with their jobs. In comparison to their peers, professionals with MSW degrees were more likely to report dissatisfaction with input into decision making in the agency in which they worked, and with professional opportunities and activities. However, professionals with MSW degrees were more likely to report that the general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem than their colleagues with non-SW or BSW degrees. Professionals with BSW degrees were more likely than their peers to state that peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise than their peers.

Job seeking (past 12 months).

Significant differences in job seeking activities were not reported.

Intention to stay (next 12 months).

Professionals with MSW degrees were more likely to have retirement plans within the next 10 years than professionals with BSW or other, non-social work degrees. Professionals with an MSW were also more likely to report intentions to leave public/tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency work in the next 12 months (i.e., be **leavers**) than their peers. Professionals with a non-social work degree or a BSW were more likely to indicate intentions to stay in their current positions for the next 12 months. Professionals with MSW degrees were also more likely to make their own supervisors aware of their intention to stay or leave than professionals with BSW or other, non-social work degrees. Professionals

with an MSW reported that increased frequency or length of supervision, higher quality supervision, and additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes would increase their likelihood of staying in their current positions.

Child protection reform.

Professionals with MSW degrees were more likely to report dissatisfaction with the communication from agency leadership about the proposed changes in child protection practice. They were also less likely to believe their agency had advocated for the child welfare workforce during the current child protection reform process. Professionals with BSW degrees were more likely to report satisfaction with the communication from leadership at the Department of Human Services (DHS) about the proposed changes in child protection. Professionals with a non-SW degree were more likely to report satisfaction with their agency's advocacy for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process.

Graduate Degree Attainment

As noted in the previous section of this report, not only do professionals in the field come from different educational programs, but many professionals have advanced degrees within their program (and not just in social work). Thus, it is possible that professionals with advanced educational backgrounds (i.e., those with advanced degrees, regardless of educational program) could hold different opinions about their experiences within workforce. In an effort to understand these potential differences, we compared data provided by professionals with a graduate degree to those without graduate degrees using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic characteristics.

Professionals holding graduate degrees were more likely to come from Title IV-E educational programs, be supervisors, and identify as professionals of color than professionals without graduate degrees.

Job satisfaction.

Professionals with graduate degrees were less likely to report satisfaction with their current job and less likely to believe that they have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which they work. Professionals

with graduate degrees were also less likely to believe 1) that professional development opportunities and activities provided by their agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance their ability to do their job, 2) that the general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem, and 3) that child welfare staff cooperatively participates with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies within their agency.

Job seeking (past 12 months).

The job seeking activities of professionals holding a graduate degree did not significantly differ from those of professionals without a graduate degree.

Intention to stay (next 12 months).

Professionals with graduate degrees were more likely to plan to leave public/tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency work in the next 12 months than professionals without graduate degrees.

Child protection reform.

Professionals with graduate degrees were less satisfied with the communication from their agency's leadership about the proposed changes in child protection and were less likely to feel as though their agency advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process. In addition, professionals with graduate degrees were less likely to believe their agency advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process as compared to professionals without graduate degrees.

Tenure within the Field

Much like educational preparation and training, tenure in the field may also influence professionals' perceptions about their experiences in the workforce. Professionals who have long tenures have likely witnessed and participated in many practice and policy changes in their careers; they also have had the benefit of working with many different families in a variety of circumstances. Professionals with shorter lengths of tenure do not have this historical knowledge and experience; as such, their perceptions of the work may differ from those with longer periods of tenure.

In an effort to understand potential differences among professionals with varying lengths of tenure (and therefore, experience) in the field, we compared data provided by professionals with less than three years' experience, those with 3-8 years of experience, and those with nine or more years of experience using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic characteristics.

Professionals with nine years or more in the field were more likely to be in a supervisory position and to be female than those who had shorter lengths of tenure. Professionals with 3-8 years of tenure were more likely to be alumni of a Title IV-E education and training program than other professionals.

Job satisfaction.

Professionals with more than nine years of tenure were significantly more likely to report areas of dissatisfaction than their peers. This group had a larger proportion that reported: 1) that they are sometimes afraid for the safety of their family members due to the nature of their work, 2) that they feel overwhelmed in their job duties, 3) they have experienced secondary traumatic stress, 4) that secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected their ability to carry out their job duties, 5) that frequent changes in policies has negative impact on their job performance, and 6) that they would be better able to carry out their job duties and responsibilities if policy decision explanations were made clearer for them. This group also was more likely to report that their supervision centered on administration and monitoring. Professionals with less than three years of tenure were more likely to report that the general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem than their colleagues.

Job seeking (past 12 months).

Professionals with more than nine years of tenure were more likely to look for a job in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency than their colleagues (i.e., be **movers**). Professionals with 3-8 years of experience were more likely to report looking for a job (either within or outside of the field [i.e., be **movers and leavers**]).

Intention to stay (next 12 months).

Professionals with more than nine years of tenure were more likely to report plans to retire within the next 10 years than were their peers. This group was also more likely to report that their supervisors were aware of their intention to stay in (or leave) their current position within the next 12 months. As compared to their peers, professionals with more than nine years of tenure in the field reported that they would be more likely to stay in their current positions if they had an increased salary, or if they had increased frequency or length of supervision and additional professional development opportunities.

Child protection reform.

Professionals with less than three years of tenure were less likely to report they were aware of the child protection reforms taking place, or the specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota and how they would impact their practice. Those with nine or more years of tenure were more likely to report feeling that their agency had advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process.

Appendix B3

Child Protection Statewide Qualitative Findings

This appendix is the detailed report on the qualitative analysis and findings associated with the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stability Study. Significant themes were included in the main body of the report and full analysis of the qualitative feedback on the survey is within this appendix. Specifically, analysis of responses to the survey item phrased, “Please tell us if there is anything else that would increase your likelihood of staying employed in public or tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency,” and a follow-up item at the end of the survey phrased, “If you would like to clarify any of your responses or give additional feedback for consideration, please share below.” These questions were not expected to lead to significant qualitative responses from professionals. However, there were substantial and meaningful comments that deserved significant review and are discussed in the following findings.

Method

Sample:

The focus of this qualitative analysis was responses provided by individuals who work with families due to issues of maltreatment, including those working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption/permanency. Of the 330 responses provided, we filtered out responses such as “no,” “I don’t know,” and “NA” or “not applicable.” A total of 286 professionals gave substantive answers to the two questions. The sample excluded comments from managers without direct supervision of case-carrying workers and case aides as well.

Coding:

Codes were created inductively from emerging themes and subcategories organized per the number of people mentioning the themes. Foremost, themes were identified from responses to open-ended survey questions using emergent coding. The main themes identified served as the initial codes in the codebook. Other subcategories emerged during the coding process. All responses were coded using NVivo software for qualitative analysis. Themes were used to formulate the key findings in the report.

Summary of themes

Summaries of the broader themes were clustered in order of significance to include what professionals talked about most. It should be noted that the professionals surveyed often mentioned more than one concern, so the total number of responses is greater than the number of professionals that responded to these survey questions. As shown in Figure 2, work wellbeing was cited by 194 professionals (67.8%, the most commonly identified theme), followed by negative effects of the work toll on the workforce (48%, n=138), child welfare system reform (47%, n=135), more support from stakeholders (43%, n=124), work climate (42%, n=121) and perceptions on child welfare work (15.7%, n=45). Quotes are used throughout this appendix to illustrate key findings from the qualitative data.

Figure 2. Key themes identified from qualitative responses

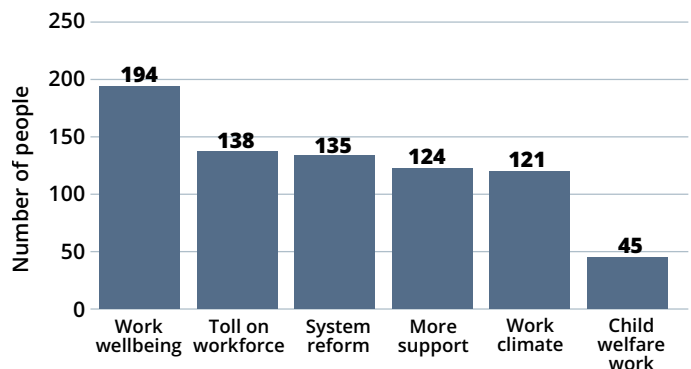


Figure 3 shows the number of times the themes were mentioned. Work wellbeing was mentioned 302 times, followed by toll on workforce (228 times), work climate (192 times) and system reform (191 times). It is important to note that some comments had overlapping themes. In this case, the collective response is coded only once under one theme, but the individual ideas are coded in subthemes under other major themes. This captured the number of professionals who cited the main theme, and also the number of times the specific ideas in the subthemes were talked about. For example, 119 people said addressing work climate would increase their likelihood of staying employed in protection, but overall, work climate was mentioned 192 times, making it the third most talked about theme.

Figure 3. Number of times professionals talked about key themes

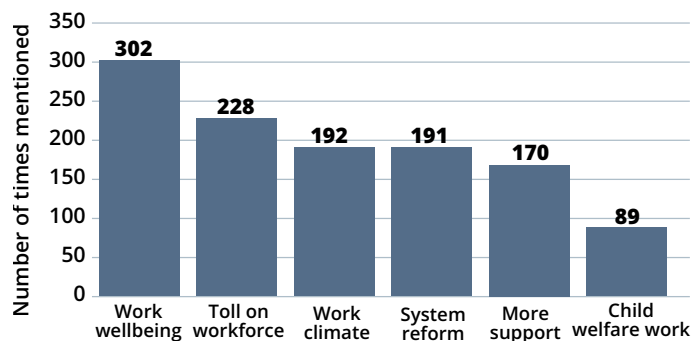
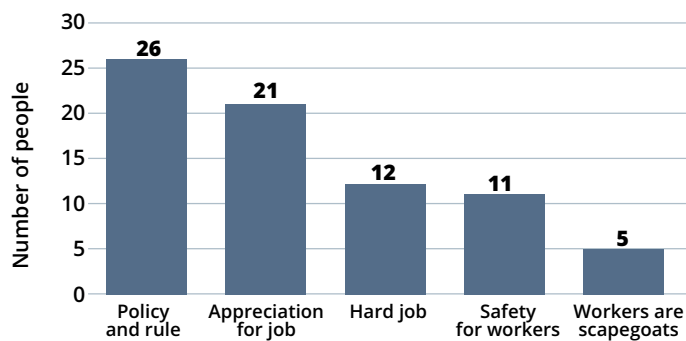


Figure 4. Professionals' perspectives of child protection work



RESULTS

Emerging themes were rearranged to relay the story given in the data, not necessarily starting with the most commonly mentioned themes. Child welfare professionals' perceptions of child welfare work and the work climate are presented first, followed by their experiences of child protection work and how the work impacts them, then the problems with the child welfare system, and finally how different stakeholders could support their work. A figure summarizing the subcategories of each main theme are presented at the beginning of each section, as well as a brief narrative description of the responses to each theme. As part of the analysis, responses are presented based on interpretation of the significance of the themes as mentioned by professionals and substantiated with illustrative quotes in textboxes.

Child Welfare Work

As shown in Figure 4, professionals' responses about child welfare work focused on five subthemes: policy and rule, appreciation for job, hard job, safety for workers, and workers are scapegoats. It is interesting to note that professionals reported mixed perceptions regarding child welfare work. For example, 19 of the 286 professionals (7%) said they love their job while 4% felt that child protection work is the hardest job they have ever done.

Policy and rule.

Policy and Rule emerged as the largest sub-theme within Child Welfare Work. Twenty-six professionals shared responses about the impacts of policy change and rule development on their day to day work. Most responses highlight the challenges associated with Minnesota reform efforts that have led to rapid policy change. Responses suggest that rapid, wide-sweeping policy changes are having unintended and sometimes detrimental impacts on the work of child protection professionals. Further, professionals reported feeling their voices were inadequately represented in policy changes and rule development.

"I love child protection but the continued adding of requirements without easing up on already expected duties is insane. Additionally, the added staff has been a bonus but is not enough, is taking too long to hire and get trained, and [they] are not well equipped for the fast pace of CP in a suburban community."

"Even though my agency has been involved with the policy changes I disagree that the people who made those changes were truly aware of the front line demands that we face."

"I believe that our agency is very supportive of the work we do. However, I am incredibly dissatisfied with the state's involvement (or lack thereof) supporting all of the new mandates set forth. This increase in demands has put a lot of stress on the workers and as a result counties throughout the state will continue to see high turnover as a result. There needs to be more funding put in place to ease the caseloads of the workers but unfortunately this is not a priority for anyone at the state."

"I do not think my responses to these questions matter and that, in my mind, is at the heart of what is bothering people about this work. Our work is criticized in the media, our agencies are overwhelmed by the volume of work coming in and questions abound about the nature of that work. People who do the work feel excluded from the process of identifying what changes need to be made and administrations are struggling to make this work marketable in the face of the challenges we face. My commitment to children and families has not wavered. I am not disgruntled (or at least don't think I am), I just think there is a disconnect between policy, policy makers, administrations, and line staff."

"Better support statewide. I think the governor is implementing change without having a good understanding of what we do. There is not a good understanding of the limited resources we have in rural Minnesota. WE have good support within our agency but community wide and state wide there just isn't a good understanding."

"There are many more legislative mandates put on CP, than other program areas, and our compliance with those mandates is critical to our agencies receiving funding, and the overall safety of the children and families we serve."

"Workers cannot be expected to continue to do more with less, be expected to remember every change that is made at DHS, when instead our focus should not be chained to our computer, but instead out hands on working with families."

"There is also a lack of clarification with new policies, no two persons seem to be on the same page when it comes to interpretation and implementation."

Appreciation for job.

Professionals expressed appreciation for child protection work for a variety of reasons. To some, child protection work provides personal fulfillment or gratification in working with families face-to-face and making changes in the lives of clients. Others felt good about the teams they work with, support from their coworkers, the quality of their supervision, and the county agencies where they work. As such, some professionals indicated that they would not leave child protection work, for better or for worse. In addition, some professionals said they feel protected by management. Below are excerpts from responses from workers about child protection work.

"I truly enjoy my position and feel like it makes a difference in the high risk and early intervention clients I serve."

"I truly enjoy my job and my team I work with."

"I don't plan on leaving, I love my job and feel everything listed above already takes place where I work!"

"For the most part I like what I do and I feel I am good at it."

"I am happy where I am at with my career."

"I have worked this job for many years and love the work."

"I love my job as a child protection social worker, the face to face work with families."

"I would like to see where I would be able to go and do some other work in the County but would still be able to return to my present job in a few months because I like my job."

"[Survey question] #25 assumed that I am unhappy in my position and therefore asked what would need to change in order for me to stay. I am happy and believe that I receive quality supervision and an appropriate caseload, so instead answered the questions as what I thought would be important instead of what needed to change."

"I never thought I would leave this field. I planned to move up into management but I refuse to do that at this agency. I will not supervise staff in a job that is impossible."

"I am happy where I am at with my career. It is hard to adjust to when it gets to be extremely busy. The court aspect is hard but I am getting there. My supervisor and co-workers are great team members and I don't think I would still be here if it weren't for them."

Hard job.

Only four percent of professionals that responded to the open-ended question indicated that child protection is a hard job. The most common concerns raised by child protection workers related to external pressures, unrealistic expectations of child protection workers, and bad experiences with law enforcement, the court system, and threats from parents. Some professionals were also concerned with work climate issues such as heavy workload, the intense nature of the work, and frequent turnover of workers and supervisors. Work climate will be discussed in detail in the next section. Some of the workers also noted that they worked in fear of personal liabilities for children riding in their personal vehicles due to lack of official transport. Below are some of the key quotes from the professionals.

"This is the hardest job I have ever had--not because of the nature of the work but because of the pressure from our agency who is receiving pressure from DHS who is receiving pressure from the Governor's Task Force and so on. I have to fight every day to remember my social work values and operate according to them."

"I have been at [County] for 23 years. The job is difficult, challenging, and very stressful."

"I have worked in CPS for many years, and it has always been a difficult job."

"I like my job, for the most part, but it has been getting harder with our higher caseloads, higher expectations, and higher turnover rates. We are a sinking ship and it feels like there isn't any help on the horizon."

"Child Protection is the worst job in the agency and will assure that you will have no life. It has become an all-encompassing and all-consuming job that cannot be done in an 8 hour day. Therefore, you have turnover in supervisors as well as among social workers. Recruiting appropriate candidates for CP positions is difficult because of the intense nature and risk involved in doing these jobs."

Safety of workers.

Nine workers (3%) expressed concern about the safety of frontline staff. The most common safety concern identified was threats from families.

"In my 30 years of experience I have never seen a professional social worker in cps have a healthy spirit, mind, body, and soul at time of retirement. I have had my car brake lines cut, Tarasoff Notice, threats, my children were in harm's way by clients and their children."

"I'm sure I have been impacted by workplace trauma based on being threatened sometimes daily by families that I work with and have not identified what that is or how I can deal with that better.."

"Somehow, address the need for personal safety. Law enforcement can attend investigations/assessments, but the ongoing workers regularly attend homes and do not have Law Enforcement. Also, somehow make it so the personal worker cannot be responsible (or identified as the person) making decisions for cases. It makes them a target!"

Workers are scapegoats.

Child protection professionals that responded to this survey felt strongly that workers take blame when there is a negative outcome in child protection.

Concern was expressed that no one is paying attention to the deficits within the system that overburden workers and that create a lack of preventative measures to protect children. Professionals said stakeholders are quick to point fingers at child welfare workers and to say that they are not working hard enough. Below are selected excerpts from this sub-theme.

"A member of management blamed direct line social workers for actions taken by management that resulted in lawsuit. I never talk with manager alone and have witnesses of electronic data trail to provide protection from this type of lack of professionalism."

"The same system that over burdens workers, short changes children and families and then turns around and tells social workers they do not do enough, and they are to blame for child protection issues in their community."

"If we as a State decide to move the child welfare system to higher level of performance then it is going to take [social] changes, legal changes, financial changes, workforce development and service development not just pointing fingers at child welfare staff and saying work harder which is the current theme. Thank you for letting me vent"

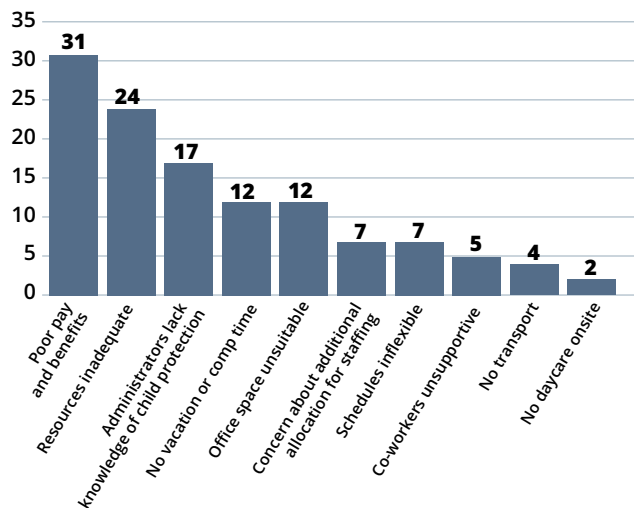
"I am afraid, too, that we social workers will be at increased risk of scapegoating if more children die in the future because more prevention work did not occur. There is only so much we can do once things get really, really bad. Thanks for listening."

"If something were to happen to the children in those situations, even though it was a Judge who put the children in the situation, it would most likely come directly back on CPS and blame the system for not doing their job."

Work Climate

More than 42% of the frontline staff (n=121) talked about work climate as an area that needs urgent reform to increase their likelihood of staying employed in child protection. As shown in Figure 5, the three most cited problems were poor pay and benefits (n=31, 25.6%), inadequate resources for child protection work (n=24, 19.8%), and administrators lacking understanding of child protection work (n=17, 14%). Professionals who responded to the survey were also concerned about vacation and compensation time, unsuitable office spaces, allocation of funds for staffing, inflexible schedules, unsupportive coworkers, lack of office transport, and lack of child care on site for professionals with children.

Figure 5. Factors affecting work climate



Poor pay and benefits.

Desiring a higher salary was mentioned by 31 professionals. A number of child protection professionals commented that they wanted to be compensated at a higher salary rate and that benefits like better health-care coverage would contribute to their likelihood of staying employed in child protection work. Professionals identified a number of concerning areas within this category including pay disparity with new child protection hires, long working hours, and the imbalance of compensation with the demands of the job.

“Administration is in a difficult position as well as how do you pay social workers right out of school more than you pay a seasoned worker in another area that has to take increased job duties to relieve [sic] child protection staff.”

“For the amount of work that a rural CP social worker has, as far as 24 screening, 24 hr response, the possible need for “eyes on” to be done by a CP social worker in some cases, and the increase in case numbers, CP workers should be compensated with a higher salary.”

“I am pretty committed so the only thing would be health insurance. I am working 28 hrs/wk and have no coverage.”

“I was hired at a different rate then [sic] the new workers coming in. They make more than I do now and I think that is unfair.”

“The command of the job and the salary do not balance out.”

“The cost of living is high. As a single parent, what I make is not enough and the stress of figuring things out on my own is becoming not worth it.”

Inadequate resources.

Twenty four professionals mentioned inadequate resources in their qualitative responses. The main concerns in this sub-theme included lack of shelters and foster homes for clients, access to technologies to aid work, office vehicles or reimbursement for use of personal vehicles for work, and services or concrete supports for clients, especially in rural areas. Another area of concern was lack of resources for additional training and education for law enforcement, county attorneys, and court services personnel so they understand the CP requirements. Below are some quotes to illustrate the professionals’ opinions.

“DHS and the State legislature need to take all factors into account when making decisions that impact the frontline staff and supervisors in rural Counties that do not have the resources available to urban areas. The shortage of foster homes, psychiatric services, shelter care and residential treatment beds is in a State of crisis. We have had to place children out of State because there are no beds available here. Seeing children within 24 hours is impossible at times because they end up in hospitals out of State. Many of the rural Counties do not have a staff member assigned to handle adoptions, involuntary foster care or other permanency options. Those responsibilities are extremely time consuming and, unfortunately, must be handled by the CP workers. There are no easy answers to many of these issues. What can be done to lighten the burden in rural Counties?”

“It is very difficult to work in a rural area, as resources are very limited. It is difficult to arrange transportation for clients, due to distance and cost.”

“Changes to the foster care system and MAPCY have resulted in even fewer foster homes. The availability of foster homes is a desperate need. Community members report some Counties are refusing to provide a foster care license to working adults to avoid the need for daycare.”

“Overwhelmed CP Case Management and a complete lack of shelters and foster providers to handle the out of home placements that are happening as a result. The entire system is overwhelmed.”

“Increased availability of resources necessary to do the job-current resource scarcity makes it difficult to do the job at all (i.e., few foster homes, turnover in mental health, school, other community providers) means we are always working hard to educate collaterals involved in cases-a never ending process. Trying to manage all of the resource development (not part of the official job description) and relationship building in addition to taxing job duties is difficult. Also, in my spare time I work to advocate on the local level and have been involved recently with work around sex trafficking and housing development.”

Administrators lack knowledge of child protection.

A number of child protection professionals reported that their administrators and some supervisors lack understanding of the work they do in child protection. They reported that some supervisors have never carried a caseload and have no knowledge of SSIS. They noted that such supervisors do not know how to assess caseload size and consequently cannot recognize when workers are overwhelmed. Child protection professionals identified the belief that stakeholders, including members of Governor Dayton’s Taskforce for the Protection of Children, lack understanding of the day to day work of child protection, making recommendations and subsequent practice changes difficult to implement.

“My supervisor has never done cps work except take on call as last resort. They say the director has told them not to do that task but have other staff and backups complete these even when illness or other events make it difficult for staff to come to work.”

“I don’t trust the person representing us to the public. I don’t trust she/they know what we really do, know the reality of our jobs, know how unreasonable it is, or know how to accurately represent us.”

“More supportive Supervisor and Director, who is experienced in Child Protection and who has carried a case load, and who is knowledgeable in SSIS and knows how to use SSIS. Someone who has actually had to do child protection before, manage a case, and be involved in the entire process. One who can relate to how it feels to remove a child and how to use self-care after wards.”

“The lack of respect at the State level for the work being done at the County level is abhorrent. Members of the task force seem to believe that all CP workers are lazy and don’t do quality work. While that can certainly be true of some, it is not of all. Members who do not practice and base their judgments on a few interactions that were more than likely negative had a huge say in what should be done and changed.”

No vacation or compensation time and inflexible schedules.

Professionals shared concerns regarding schedules, including the inability to bank compensation time when work requires extra hours, concern about 24/7 on-call coverage, and lack of flexibility in schedule.

“As a result of the lack of balance and lack of an adequately staffed team, child protection workers are consistently working evenings, weekends and during vacation to be able to meet the obligations entrusted to us to ensure the safety and well-being of children.”

“Flexible work schedules. I hear [County] has 35 hour work weeks with no reduction in pay or benefits. Even that little bit would help.”

“Development of an on-call system for weekend coverage, so employees have a weekend off without work.”

“Our County recently changed exempt/non-exempt status for social workers which has resulted in a change to time for time and a half for comp instead of just time for time. This has resulted in our supervisors to increase the monitoring of how much comp time social workers earn. This has created a great deal of stress for myself and other social workers. Unfortunately, most weeks our job duties cannot be completed in 40 hours per week or within an 8 hour day. This is causing many social workers including myself to have to work late hours and take time off when it is not convenient for us to do so within the 40 hour week.”

“Previously we could earn comp time and use at any time in the future. This has negatively affected time with our families and has created additional stress within our agency.”

“A lot of work is not getting done because comp time is not allowed.”

Unsuitable office space and unsupportive coworkers.

Child protection professionals expressed concern about the lack of privacy in office settings, and with unsupportive coworkers. They noted that cubicles negatively affect the sense of community and relationships among coworkers and also limit privacy when working with clients. Professionals recommended assigned work spaces to help change the office culture. Some workers feel that making the work environment more fun would also help build community and increase cross-program communication. Others expressed desire to be located in an office with their direct co-workers. Some workers recommended agencies

provide training to staff on how to tactfully and efficiently approach coworkers with personal or professional grievances with the goal of resolving issues quickly before they grow bigger.

"A non-cubicle work environment would increase my job satisfaction immensely. With the cube farm, there is no privacy, no personal control over noise level, I can't shut my door to signal to coworkers that I am busy, the layout of the cubes results in some social dead zones where the person housed there is largely ignored just because their cube doorway is out of the way and their cube is hidden in a corner behind several other cubes. We lost our sense of community and relationships when we were shoved into cubes."

"Ways to improve work relationships between coworkers. Example: training on how to tactfully and efficiently approach coworkers with (personal or professional) grievances with the goal of resolving issues quickly before they grow into bigger issues while empowering employees with a voice that makes changes."

Concern about additional allocation for staffing.

Some professionals reported concern about counties hiring child protection staff following new funding with that specific purpose.

"In [County] less than 4% of our Child Protection Allocation from 2015 ... was used on staffing. It was very disheartening to have workers thinking they were going to get relief on the ground and then have the County chose to either pocket (carry-over) that money or use it for non-staff purposes."

"[County] was given 11 positions to help with the increase in cases due to the screening criteria changing. Before those 11 were given, our director froze 5 current positions. She made it clear that other areas in the agency needed help too. Thus reducing the 11 to 6 positions. Due to this the turnover in CPS has been the highest in over 15 years. At certain times we were down 25+ workers."

"The child protection allocation in my County is not being used for additional staff... Counties are experts at finding loopholes to use funds to purposes other than what they were intended. What would help is for statutory changes requiring Counties to use 100% of the child protection allocation funds directly for social worker staffing until the agency is at a staffing pattern consistent with the recommendations from the Child Welfare Workload Study and Analysis prepared by Hornby Zeller Associates circa 2009."

"It has been very frustrating to have been given an allotment of funds to decrease the worker/caseload ratio and then not experience swift and effective follow by our County's Human Services board and administrators. Our child protection staff has been enduring a minimum of 3 years of severe turnover in an already understaffed, crisis oriented work environment."

"We simply need more workers. Money to the agency is not being used to hire more child protection workers - it is moved to other areas of the agency - such as Youth Engagement Program, Foster Care, etc. Child protection intake and case management is in desperate need of more staff and immediately. There has been a huge turnover of staff in child protection intake and case management because the job is unmanageable."

Child care onsite and office transport.

A couple of individuals expressed concern with challenging work conditions including lack of onsite child-care for workers with children, and use of personal vehicles or liability for children (clients) riding in personal vehicles.

"I really think for younger workers with families, it would be great to have day care onsite. I know this is a big request and an issue Statewide for available day care providers but could you imagine the reduction of stress in trying to get to work in the morning?"

"I would like to see a stipend for a standard monthly rate for a vehicle allowance along with current mileage reimbursement. I am experiencing extreme depreciation of my personal vehicle due to an average of 500-700 miles per week for in home visits with families. Insurance cost, oil changes, gas, maintenance, and personal liability of children riding in personal vehicle are all factors but the depreciation has been one apparent setback."

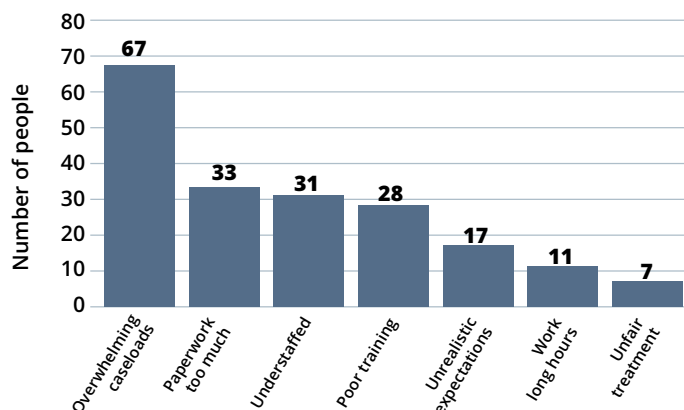
Work Wellbeing

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that 194 workers (67.8% of the 286 professionals that responded to the open-ended questions) talked about work wellbeing as the single most important factor that will impact their likelihood of staying employed in child protection work as shown in Figure 2. Work wellbeing was mentioned 302 times (see Figure 3).

As shown in Figure 6, the seven sub-categories of work wellbeing, the single most significant concern was overwhelming or unmanageable caseloads (n=67, 34.5%). The three most frequent concerns after

overwhelming caseloads were too much paperwork (n=33, 17%), understaffing (n=31, 16%), and poor training and lack of professional development opportunities (n=28, 14.4%). Other important factors included unrealistic expectations of child protection professionals (n=17, 8.8%), working long hours (n=11, 5.7%), and unfair treatment of child welfare professionals (n=7, 3.6%).

Figure 6. Factors of work wellbeing reported by professionals.



Lower caseloads, more staff, and less paperwork.

Overwhelming caseloads were noted by 67 professionals, followed by too much paperwork (noted by 33 professionals), and being understaffed (noted by 31 professionals) as shown in Figure 6. These themes are related. Workers reported being inundated by unreasonably heavy caseloads coupled with too much paperwork. This situation is aggravated by the fact that county agencies have fewer case-carrying social workers according to professionals responding to the survey. Despite the workers’ desire for manageable caseloads of 10-12 cases, some workers reported managing caseloads of 30-60 children. As a result, some professionals reported they are forced to screen out cases they believe should be accepted for further services, or cut short their visits with clients as a result of capacity. Some professionals said they are currently working 60 hours or more in a week, yet they feel perpetually behind.

Professionals were concerned that higher than normal caseloads negatively impact the quality of their work with families, and their ability to meet firm timelines. Professionals talked about the de-professionalization of child protection work because they are neither

able to do their work effectively nor use their professional discretion or best practice knowledge. As a result, professionals are seeing coworkers leaving child protection for less stressful jobs or better work opportunities. Below are quotes from child protection professionals regarding unmanageable caseloads, too much paperwork, and the need for more workers.

“In addition to having way too many families to work with, and SPEND TIME with them, Social Workers are burdened with documentation requirements that create additional barriers to the work. Documentation is understandable and we should be accountable, but the excess of forms, procedures, and recording is so overwhelming that you have to choose between talking to kids and getting your paperwork done. Paperwork does not equal safety and wellbeing for kids! Face to face time and work with families is the most valuable thing we can spend our time on, and that increases safety and wellbeing!”

“Lower caseloads. I never work just 40 hours a week. I work all day into the evening at least three nights out of the week and I often work on the weekends to catch up.”

“It is nearly impossible to apply the best practice models we learned in school during the Title IV-E program because there are so many restrictions, too many tasks/paperwork and too many children to lay eyes on--we can’t use our professional discretion or best practice knowledge.”

“I feel like I do not spend enough time in case consultation/ reflection of work with my workers. I have had so much turnover because of the high stress and frustration with the various systems that impact our work. I feel like I am asking workers to do more than they are capable of doing. Too many tasks to accomplish and not enough time to spend with families.”

“I used to be able to balance work and personal life but as the expectations continue to get more extreme and the hours get longer, this job is not family friendly and it is hard to do with children. I have had children for many of my years in CP but it has become harder and harder to balance given the workload expectations.”

“It has been impossible for a small County to compete with larger County pay scales to hire enough child protection staff. This has made caseloads with new expectations too high and shifted duties to other social workers as well which has made their caseloads too high for the expectations as well. We lose child protection workers as fast as we can get them and have only been fully staffed one week in 2015.”

“What is seriously impacting Child Protection workers is the vastly increased caseloads since the Task Force implementation of new rules and standards regarding Child Protection practice coupled with the astronomical increase in paperwork from such and newer programs such as North Star and Kinship. It has been a fact for years the Child Protection workers have experienced severe time erosions due to governmental paperwork requirements regarding social work practice. A good example being SSIS continually demanding more information turning workers into seekers of data and data entry workers as opposed to being out in the field and working with children and families.”

Poor training and no professional development.

There were conflicting opinions on professional development among individuals who responded to the open-ended question. While some professionals expressed desire for development opportunities to improve their careers, some felt it not worthwhile to bother because of the added pressure of dealing with all the missed work after the training and pressures to meet performance mandates. Many professionals who responded to the survey did not see attending training as the problem, but rather the unreasonable and unattainable demands on workers as noted below.

“Also, while we have lots of opportunities for training and are supported to attend trainings – the duties of work and preparing to be out and then dealing with all the work missed while at the training makes it often not worthwhile to bother.”

“I would like more training and policy explanation, but the time it takes away from the workload puts you more behind, adding more stress.”

“Being provided actual training by supervisors in Child Protection instead of applying the “Trial by Fire” method of case management. This job has a steep learning curve and new employees should be eased in to the position. Also, the County needs to use money to train their Child Protection Workers in their specific fields by allowing them to attend the culturally competent trainings they need such as ICWA, Hmong, Karen, Somali-based trainings.

“Child Protection workers are not trained in their jobs and are allowed to do poor work. They are not supervised sufficiently and are treated differently than all other positions and allowed to continue to do poor work. People move positions because they don't know what they are doing and then get frustrated because other professionals get upset with them. The problem is not policy the problem is training within agencies and agencies allowing workers to continue to do the work wrong with no consequence.”

“I would also love if the agency would be able to help provide funds for further education (i.e. allow for reimbursement for social workers to complete a social work degree and become licensed if they have a degree in another field).”

Unrealistic expectations.

Almost nine percent (8.8%) of professionals expressed serious concern about perceived unrealistic expectations of staff to do the work of child protection. As shown in the excerpts from workers' responses below, one worker said **“The job requirements are impossible to complete and do well”** and another said, **“... I feel like the legislature and DHS have put more on our shoulders over the years, especially with the recent Taskforce recommendations.”** Professionals reported being concerned about their inability to provide quality service to the children and families they serve due to the unrealistic expectations of child protection professionals.

“The job requirements are impossible to complete and do well. I don't like not being able to provide adequate services to my clients. I work over 50 hours a week, unpaid and still can't get everything done that is needed. I don't get supervision hours for my license and have to use my own time and money to pay for this.”

“The work that a child protection worker conducts is something nobody can understand unless you actually do the job. CP workers are expected to be social workers, attorneys, law enforcement and counselors. The intense work and expectations for workers is significant and smaller caseloads would enable these workers to better serve their clients.”

“It has been impossible to effectively do my job with the caseloads and expectations of what we should be doing for every case. Almost all cases are in court and I am not able to do what has been court ordered, much less what I SHOULD be doing on all files. The addition of more layers of regulations are not helpful and only add to the paperwork burden.”

“Soooo much paperwork, so many different plans, and 100% time reporting on SSIS and yet we are supposed to be out there meeting with our families. The expectation of our time (70% minimum expectation of direct time-if you reach 70% however, it's still not seen as good enough) is unrealistic when you have to have all of these plans, assessments, documentation, etc. done. Feels like you can't even clean your desk off or read about new research or what have you unless you can justify putting it under a case name so you get that direct time in! So frustrating!”

"I can't stress enough how incredibly damaging it is to have caseloads as high as they are. There is not communication between investigations and screening and the new screening guidelines make investigations incredibly difficult to manage. 3 investigations a week is a high quality 40 hour a week job in which quality work can be done to reduce risk and join with families. We are currently at 5 a week as staff have not increased and cases being screened in have drastically increased."

"I have worked in CPS for many years, and it has always been a difficult job. However, I feel like the legislature and DHS have put more on our shoulders over the years, especially with the recent Taskforce recommendations. People often get into CPS as they want to help children and families, but many leave due to the high expectations and stresses of the job. I anticipate that the high turnover in CPS will continue, but glad that your group is looking at the problem and trying to do something about it."

Working long hours.

Eleven (almost 6%) professionals cited working long hours as one of the reasons that will decrease their likelihood of staying employed in public or tribal child protection. As discussed in the preceding sub-sections, working long hours is related to unmanageable caseloads, too much paperwork, fewer staff working in the agencies, and unrealistic expectations.

"Lower caseloads. I never work just 40 hours a week. I work all day into the evening at least three nights out of the week and I often work on the weekends to catch up."

"Additionally, I have worked a minimum of 50 hours a week (sometimes up to 65 hours a week) since I started to carry a case load. This is not sustainable, and I do not feel like I am able to provide my clients with the time that they deserve."

"As a result of the lack of balance and lack of an adequately staffed team, child protection workers are consistently working evenings, weekends and during vacation to be able to meet the obligations entrusted to us to ensure the safety and well-being of children."

"With me working hours outside of the 9-5 M-F, but still a fulltime SW what I have found is that almost everything offered is during my non-working hours which I have to come in for. Also staffing has to be as close to equal as the workload. Ongoing case managers are seeing caseloads lowered, but in what I do on any given weekend and/or evening from any SW in our agency we can see request for contacts with family's be from manageable to "how do I get done with all this in my work hours plus give family's [sic] the attention and need they deserve?"

Unfair treatment.

The last sub-theme of work wellbeing was professionals' concern about unfair treatment. As shown in Figure 6, seven (almost 4%) professionals said they are unfairly treated in terms of salary and benefits, and being consulted about changes in the agencies that impact on their work. For example, one worker said, **"I was hired at a different rate than the new workers coming in. They make more than I do now and I think that is unfair."** Other professionals were also concerned about the unequal treatment of staff in other units in the agency compared to child protection in terms of training.

"Child protection supervisors and workers were all given raises. Foster care workers and supervisors were not. There is little appreciation attention and understanding given to supportive services that are necessary for all the new CP screening requirements."

"In the other unit, they have caseloads of 2 or 3 and have been here for 3 to 4 months. I would like it to be fair and considerate."

"Staff are moved around for the current need of the administrators with what feels like no consideration given to the skills and talents of the staff. Staff are not given a choice of which position to take when reorganized. Staff have been moved from their positions while on maternity or other leave without notice that it is going to happen. The feeling that we can be moved at the whim of administration leaves a feeling that our jobs are not stable and is very hard at times to feel like putting in 100% when we could be moved out of our job at any instant and without warning."

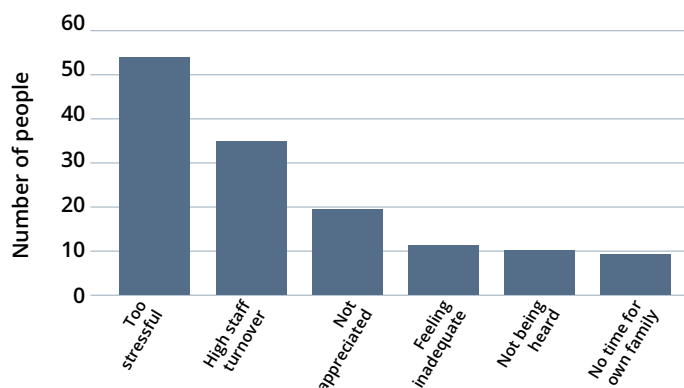
Toll on Workforce

The second most common theme represented by professional's qualitative responses was Toll on Workforce. Toll on Workforce was mentioned by 138 (48%) of professionals as shown in Figure 2. Professionals indicated that child protection work is affecting their personal wellbeing and overall attitudes as shown in Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 7, the responses from professionals revealed two sub-categories most commonly reported to have a toll on the professional workforce. The first is **"too stressful"** (18.8%, n=54) and the second is **"high staff turnover"** (12%, n=35). Child protection work was reported to affect workers' mental health and feelings of being unappreciated or undervalued (6.6%, n=19),

feeling inadequate (3.8%, n=11), not being heard (3.5%, n=10), and having no time for own family (3%, n=9).

Figure 7. Effects of child protection work on professionals' wellbeing and attitudes



Too stressful.

Survey responses indicated that the effect of child protection work on professionals' health and mental health is a major concern. For example, one professional said, ***"This is the worst it has ever been and the number of employees that are suffering with mental health issues, family problems, seeking medication, self-medicating is overwhelming."*** Workers noted that the factors leading to stress, fatigue, and secondary trauma include heavy caseloads, too much paperwork, constant changes, pressures, mixed messages, increased needs of the children and families, working with families in difficult times, and working long hours. As a result, some workers said they have become more negative and anxious. Some reported being burned out, suffering from compassion fatigue, and being emotionally exhausted. Professionals want more self-care activities offered to manage stress and to reenergize. Below are excerpts from professionals' responses.

"No, to be very honest, I am retiring early as I feel I can no longer work with victims as I have been most of my career. I am tired of seeing the underbelly of society. This work has changed my world view and I am a more negative and anxious person because of it. I am relatively happy in my personal life but my perspective has become jaded."

"[I] Will likely move to another job, but my soul has been damaged. I jump when family members touch me. Seen consistent history of organization protecting itself when concerns arise vs seeking facts and supporting staff. I have been encouraging highly skilled social work professionals to seek other positions."

"... and the stress and fatigue that is often felt by all the requirements of paperwork, entry of data into SSIS for statistics for DHS to run, dealing with hard families that have a variety of issues including drugs, neglect, abuse, financial issues, etc."

"My level of work stress was unmanageable and affected my personal life and my physical health. Only after leaving case management and moving to Screening/ Intake have I been able to realize how terrifying that situation was. I feel terrible for the new case managers. The turnover is crazy."

"Why stay in CP with all that goes with it (stress, home visits, threats, etc.) when another internal position opens up that pays the same? I personally am committed to the children I serve but I am able to maintain a resilient life outside of work."

"This is a very stressful job with little support from supervisors and their supervisors. I LOVE working with my clients, but the rest of the job is very difficult and time intensive - I typically put in 20 plus extra hours per pay period which I DO NOT get paid overtime for - this job is affecting my health, my family, and my mental health!!!!!"

"The support I have for dealing with the secondary stress of this job has been from individual therapy and clinical supervision (that I pay out of pocket for). My supervisor is WONDERFUL, but she does not have adequate time to provide the support that I know she would like to be able to provide to her supervisees."

"I would love to stay at this job. I really like it. I find though that my co-workers are so stressed that it is really affecting their lives and health. We need relief."

"Morale is very low; staff leave at the first opportunity; everyone is exhausted and stressed."

"The current demands on child protection workers are unreasonable and have a negative impact on workers, health, mental health, and family life, until these demands are decreased or additional staff are appropriated there will continue to be a flow of educated, dedicated, experienced staff members leaving child protection for other areas of social work that do not place such unreasonable and unattainable demands on workers."

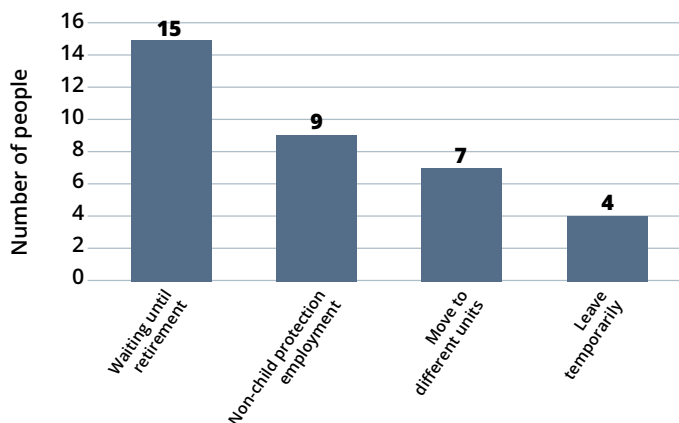
"I am currently averaging 60 hours per week, and feeling perpetually behind. I have recently been prescribed anxiety medication via an annual physical that I cancelled three times due to work demands. I would like more training and policy explanation, but the time it takes away from the work load puts you more behind, adding more stress."

"Families are not getting the best services, given the staff are burnt out, over worked and not supported by management. Our County has had more turn over in child protection than ever before. Cannot sustain this way of life. Supervisors are generally very supportive but there is nothing they can do when they have no power and being told to micro-manage their workers."

High staff turnover.

Staff turnover was cited by 12% (n=35) of the professionals who responded to the open-ended questions as a major concern. As shown in Figure 8, 15 professionals close to retirement age said they are enduring the work for the sake of their pensions. Nine professionals indicated that they are actively considering employment outside of child protection work and social work in general. Seven professionals are looking for openings in units different than child protection but within their agency, and four people want to move out of child protection temporarily as a strategy of managing stress and secondary trauma.

Figure 8. Turnover of professionals in child protection



Waiting until retirement.

Some professionals feel trapped in child protection work because of their age. In fact, one professional said, *"Given the length of time I have been in my position and my age, I am unlikely to leave my position. If I were younger I would be actively looking for another job."* Below are quotes from other professionals in the category of waiting until retirement.

"I am staying only because I want to be vested through the County's system so I will get at least a minimal pension."

"I plan to stay until I am eligible for full social security in a little less than 2 years. If the job were not so stressful-workload has more than doubled in the last 2-1/2 years-I would consider staying beyond that age."

"Have only 6 years until retirement and no other option for job opportunities at this point."

Non-child protection employment.

As shown in Figure 8, nine professionals said they were looking for employment outside of child protection and social work more broadly. Despite their love for the job, these professionals wanted to leave child protection work because of the work climate in the agency, work wellbeing concerns, and flaws in the child welfare system. However, others indicated that they would stay if there were drastic positive changes to address their concerns. Below are quotes from professionals who indicated leaving child welfare work.

"Child protection at [County] is so poorly organized at this time, which above all else the reason that I consider different employment."

"I have worked this job for many years and love the work. The caseload size and the lack of support from upper management has me applying for jobs outside of the field that I love."

"I have had enough and will be leaving this field. I am a talented, experienced worker with over 8 years of experience and a Master's degree in Social Work but I will not stay in Child Protection any longer."

"I have made the decision to leave this job if we continue to have the caseload increases we have over the 8 years I have worked at this agency---unless we see a dramatic change in the forces that are driving these caseload increases."

"Due to the high stress and lack of support, I have chosen to complete my masters in a different field. I feel disposable in my current County. There is no value to employees here and no willingness to open doors to resources that could make us more efficient."

"Putting too many restrictions on the practices of effectively working Counties will only cause more people to opt out of being child protection workers to an easier job that can work around their family schedules. In the coming years if more restrictions occur MN will see a higher turnover rate of employment, why not target the Counties with current high turnover and help them to restructure vs restructuring Counties that have 'figured it out.'"

“Right now I am sticking it out to see if positive changes come. If I lose hope that it will get better, if I am compelled to work worse hours, if I lose the ability to have comp time paid out but my workload remains excessive, or something bad happens to a child that suggests to me that I have made a mistake in staying, I will leave.”

Move to other units or leaving temporarily.

Of the professionals considering leaving child welfare work, some indicated they are moving to other areas of social work within the agency. However, some said leaving child protection temporarily is a coping strategy for dealing with years of stress and secondary trauma. Below are excerpts from responses of frontline staff planning to leave child protection.

“Burnout happens way to [sic] frequently which leads to workers transferring to other units just to get their lives back. Supervisors who handle multiple types of caseloads who are also expected to be on call 24 hours a day/365 days a year get exhausted and overwhelmed.”

“I am going to be switching to adoption from the ongoing child protection I have been doing for 15+ years because the changes in paperwork have made the job I loved into one I hate. I used to have coworkers that generally had 5 - 15+ years' experience working with me - now there is only one left with any experience and everyone else is new.”

“The current demands on child protection workers are unreasonable and have a negative impact on workers, health, mental health, and family life, until these demands are decreased or additional staff are appropriated there will continue to be a flow of educated, dedicated, experienced staff members leaving child protection for other areas of social work that do not place such unreasonable and unattainable demands on workers.”

“People continually get in the door in child protection and move to other areas as soon as they are able.”

“Leave child welfare work temporarily.”

Not appreciated or valued.

Professionals expressed a general feeling of not being appreciated by stakeholders. As shown in Figure 7, about 7% (n=19) said child protection professionals are not appreciated. Professionals were critical of the lack of public appreciation or understanding of child protection work. Professionals pointed out that child protection is rather a thankless job and that their work is often misunderstood and they are blamed by stakeholders.

“I believe if the legislature, the media and the government leaders were able to follow us around they would agree that what we do is difficult and that we get it right the vast majority of the time. But they would rather focus on the less than 1% of the time and blame and denigrate us and treat us like villains. Doing this job is rather thankless, the schools, hospitals, medical and mental health clinics and community agencies dislike us because we either did “too much” intervention or not enough. The police also dislike us when we don't agree with them. The parents or their relatives also dislike us because we were either perceived as being too aggressive or not protecting children adequately. Sometimes the courts dislike what we do or don't do. The Counties are being forced to throw us under the bus when we make mistakes so that the State or County don't get negative publicity. Are there poorly performing Social workers, yes there are; but most of them perform at a very high and competent level and they do a great job that appears to go unnoticed.”

“I don't think the public is informed about how many hours child protection social workers put in and how much they care about the children they serve. We are essentially available to our clients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even though we have families of our own.”

I really wish that upper management understood and respected the work that is being done from the front line staff. We care about the work and the families and the children we work with every day. We have good ideas on how to work better. We just ask that you communicate with us out of a place of mutual respect and honor the hard work that we do. The complete breakdown in communication and attention paid to ONLY timelines and documentation requirements has really become the focus of what is expected.

Not being heard.

As shown in Figure 7, 3.5% of the professionals that responded to the survey expressed concerns about not being listened to or consulted. Professionals who commented within this sub-theme expressed concern that management was not responsive to shared concerns.

“To be heard by upper management. We are not provided the tools to work mobile and have expressed this concern for years. We are not heard by upper management. Our direct supervisors feel the same way. How can it be possible that CPS case managers are not provided a work phone? This is a safety and confidentiality issue. It makes no sense and clearly are safety is no valued.”

"I have been asking for staff for over a year. I am applying for new positions as my unit is drowning and my cries for help have gone unheard. I would not be considering leaving were I treated equally with my CP peers when it comes to being valued and given a raise and adequate staffing to do the job."

"Family case plans, which once were simplified and consisting of 4 to five pages are now extremely complex and consist of 14 to 15 pages which clients cannot understand. Although concerns have been raised for years on the cumulative effect of such on people and agencies, it falls on deaf ears."

"Increased ability to be HEARD. Management does not listen to us and instead shoves changes down our throats. They impose upon us when we are already stressed. We are trying to comply, but it is increasingly difficult to watch out of touch high level management implement changes that are actually counterproductive to our agency's role. After 25 years in the profession, the horror stories that I have today are unprecedented. Upper level management is 100% out of touch with our mission."

"I feel heard by our supervisors but their hands are tied as well. I'm disappointed because I know we will return to focusing on well-being again one day--it's disheartening that so many workers will be lost, children and families will be traumatized and taken from each other because the pressure we feel to keep the children physical safe, even when we know the trajectory that path puts them on. I don't know if I want to be a part of that unless my involvement in child protection can be part of the solution."

"Decisions are made from the top down, with limited/no input from line workers. This may not be true however it appears as if there are no efforts to see what system updates/changes, suggestions, or solutions can be generated from direct line staff. It feels as if the State is making decisions and dictating action to staff, with little or no explanation."

"Frontline staff have no input in decision-making/policy changes and communication from management is minimal (and usually negative). I have worked in multiple agencies throughout my career and this is far and away the most dysfunctional system I have ever worked in."

"Better support statewide. I think the governor is implementing change without having a good understanding of what we do. There is not a good understanding of the limited resources we have in rural Minnesota. WE have good support within our agency but community wide and state wide there just isn't a good understanding."

No time for own family.

Nine professionals (3%) mentioned that working in child protection is affecting their own family lives as a result of unrealistic work expectations. As discussed in previous sections, child protection professionals have noted that child protection work is very difficult and time intensive. In fact, some professionals have questioned the logic of trying to preserve other families when their own families suffer from their absence. Frontline staff reported a desire to balance their work and their personal lives so they can spend time with their own families. Below are excerpts from responses of this sub-theme.

"In a career where we are working to preserve families, many of our own families suffer our absence, and are left feeling somewhat 'neglected' due to the demands of the work. That feels hypocritical."

"I used to be able to balance work and personal life but as the expectations continue to get more extreme and the hours get longer, this job is not family friendly and it is hard to do with children. I have had children for many of my years in CP but it has become harder and harder to balance given the workload expectations."

"I would stay in my current job until I retire (20 years) if the job could be more manageable. Right now I feel this job is killing me and my marriage/family. Many skilled workers are no longer in child protection due to the impossible and unrealistic expectations."

"The Counties that were already in compliance did not need the additional funding nearly as much as the Counties that could not meet the percentages given their high caseloads, staff turnover and other factors. When CP caseloads are as high as 38, workers cannot meet all the documentation and other requirements without sacrificing their personal time and family life."

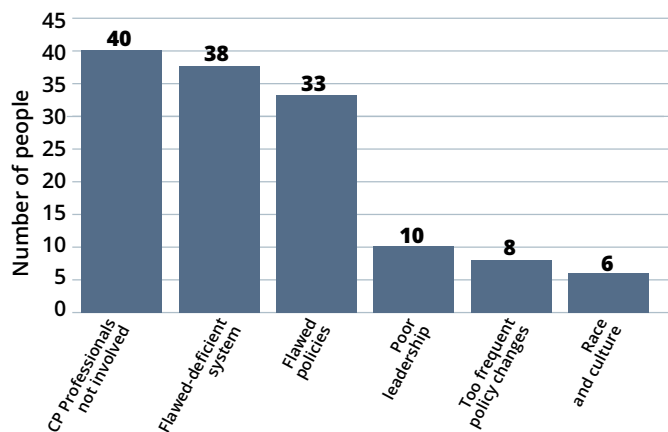
System Reform

System Reform was the third most significant area of concern, mentioned by 47% (n=135) of the professionals. Professionals noted that, if addressed, would increase their likelihood of staying employed in public or tribal child protection. In fact, system reform was noted 191 times (see Figure 3). There are six sub-themes within the system reform theme.

Of the six subcategories shown in Figure 9, the single most cited concern was exclusion of professionals from child welfare reforms and policy dialogue, mentioned

by 40 people (13.9%). The second and third most cited concerns were need to address deficiency in the child welfare system (13.3%, n=38) and flawed policies (11.5%, n=33). Other concerns of frontline professionals included poor leadership (3.5%, n=10), too frequent policy changes (2.8%, n=8), and race and culture (2.1%, n=6), largely connected to disproportionality of families of color being involved in the system.

Figure 9. Child protection professionals' concerns with child welfare system



Exclusion of child protection professionals from child welfare reforms and policy dialog.

Professionals expressed overwhelming desire to participate in ongoing reforms in the child welfare system and policy dialogs, but frustration that their opinions are not sought by county administrators, policy-makers, and the state legislature. The professionals' mantra echoes the activist charge "nothing about us without us." Child welfare professionals said they are best placed to provide feedback on how the system works and to make recommendations for change since they are doing the actual work on the ground. As such, they shared desire to be part and parcel of the development of child welfare policies and procedures. The workers saw the Governor's Taskforce as being composed of people with minimal or no child welfare work experience, and therefore the least qualified to recommend changes in the system. Similarly, many child welfare professionals stated they believe the state (DHS) has become too involved in telling counties what to do and how to respond to child protection issues.

Professionals partly attributed their exclusion from policy dialogue to a lack of open communication between DHS and the frontline workers (social workers), and partly to not being appreciated or understood

in their professional roles, as discussed in previous sections. Many professionals reported feeling that the more recent attempts at consultation with front line workers by DHS and county administrators has been a mockery of their good will. With one exception, many professionals said they were often not notified about new policies or policy changes until they erred, or after the fact, which affects the quality of service to families and the protection of children. Furthermore, some professionals were concerned that involving only a section of workers from the Twin Cities Metro Area without statewide consultations results in inappropriate policies. For example, they cited the 24-hour child protection coverage which they think is unsuitable for smaller counties. Below are some quotes to illustrate the professionals' concern of exclusion from policy dialogue.

"It's a true tragedy that no front line staff are involved in the task force or in these various policy decisions. It feels like we are the only ones who understand what is happening and the only ones not asked when it comes time to make changes."

"We are often not notified of changes at all until we make an error, or we are notified of changes after the fact by our County partners."

"DHS needs to include frontline social workers across the State (not just the twin cities area) in dialog about policy changes and/or practice ideas. Things that will work in Hennepin County, won't work in smaller agencies with limited staff and resources (i.e. 24 hour child protection coverage which will cause further staff burnout and significant child protection staff turnover)."

"There is very little that Agency staff can do or say to make Administration (Directors, County Administration, County Boards, DHS staff) change their minds/policy - they humor us by listening to our input, but have no intentions on making any changes. I have been a County worker for 30 years and this is how it has been my entire career in County government."

"... Explaining flawed thinking and policies to me by someone who has never done my job doesn't make my job easier. If you want me to "salute" and do my job I will, it doesn't make my job any easier or more fulfilling. ... most of the policy makers are Generals or above and we're Privates, "cooperative participation" is simply to appease us into believing we had some role in the decision making when we don't, however, our County administrators likely have little influence in policy decisions now since everything seems to be coming from the State"

bureaucrats. If I'm the Private then my administration are the Generals; but the orders are coming from the President (State Bureaucrats & ill-informed task forces and State Leaders) and unfortunately the Presidents are being controlled by the even more ill-informed and biased media!!!"

"Well policies are well communicated around my agency but at times we as child protection workers are too busy and at times don't get the messages."

"I have incredible support from my immediate supervisor and co-workers. But I have said time and time again that if it weren't for them I would have quit a long time ago. It feels like there is no input from front-line workers on what is feasible or possible when the oversight committees are making these decisions. It has been very disheartening to see these changes made by people who won't be affected by them."

"I am frustrated that there was very little input from people doing child protection on the task force. This is a field that is complex and difficult to understand unless you work in. There should have been more people working in the child protection field (not just supervisors) on the taskforce."

"Child Protection in this County has been "reorganized" by administrators that have business degrees and no clue what Social Work is."

"The State has become too involved in telling Counties what to do and how to respond. The State is responding to media criticism and that has led to unreasonable demands on the Counties and therefore the workers."

"It would be nice to have the statutes and rules and legislative changes include the voice of the workers that are actually doing the work and not from those who "think" certain things would be a good idea but it is not realistic when you are actually doing the job."

"Frontline staff have no input in decision-making/policy changes and communication from management is minimal (and usually negative). I have worked in multiple agencies throughout my career and this is far and away the most dysfunctional system I have ever worked in."

Child welfare system is flawed.

Figure 9 shows that flaws or deficiency in the child welfare system was the second most cited area by the frontline staff. Overall, the professionals responding to the survey were critical of the state's child welfare system, including the new SSIS screening system, lack of preventive resources, poor response and coordination

with court system and law enforcement, and penalty for noncompliance to reporting standards.

Within this sub-theme, professionals expressed concern with the new screening criteria and report that it is overstressing their capacities and abilities to provide appropriate response. As such, this impairs the quality of their decisions due to inability to focus interventions. Professionals were also concerned with difficulties around collaboration and cooperation with law enforcement and the court systems. They reported that sometimes judges make decisions that put children at risk due to lack of consultation with child welfare workers. Finally, frontline staff were also critical of the state's over involvement in telling counties what to do. Additionally, professionals noted that the state (DHS) appears more concerned with response than prevention. As such, they see current child protection consisting of superficial interventions similar to putting band aids on deep social issues instead of helping families emerge from the child welfare system. They recommend the state provide families with resources to help them come out of crisis to prevent situations that create the current problems. Below are comments provided by child welfare professionals with regard to flaws in the system.

"The bottom line is that Child Protection Services are slaves of a larger, oppressive system that dictates policy and practice from afar and seeks no input from the people working in the field. Over time, this has led to the current situation of overworked, stressed out people, horrendous amounts of face time with computers, paperwork demands that are cumbersome with little practical value for workers, and extremely high turnover rates in child protection positions."

"Our agency did an analysis of the compliance standard percentages for our County and found 12 separate factors that affected our ratings. There are faults in SSIS that negatively impacted our percentages that need to be fixed and have been reported to the SSIS Help Desk. The Counties that were already in compliance did not need the additional funding nearly as much as the Counties that could not meet the percentages given their high caseloads, staff turnover and other factors."

"I'm concerned that DHS staff are in over their heads when it comes to identifying/ managing the child protection reforms. Specifically the screening criteria changes have added much confusion rather than clarity. Staff, as a result, are being assigned to questionable cases which is taking them away from more serious/pressing/at risk

matters. This is adding to stress and capacity issues as the 'serious' matters will always take a precedent but it is getting cloudier given the direction from DHS of the matters that are rising to the 'priority' status. I don't feel suggestions provided at the 'criteria trainings' were considered prior to implementation which is a backward approach."

"The SSIS system is archaic to work with and the 100% time reporting is a big drag on my priorities."

"What is truly sad is that a large portion (20%?) of the funding to Counties is tied to timelines... timelines which can't be met because workers are beyond maxed out due to the more liberal screening guidelines. It's a catch 22 that agencies can't win. 5 cases a week is a perfect storm where more children will die and while simultaneously guaranteeing that agencies will miss out on the funding they desperately need."

"I love my job as a child protection social worker, the face to face work with families, but the longer I am here I find the bureaucratic policies are making it more difficult. The increase of time spent on SSIS to show that I am doing my job and then documenting that I documented - it's cumbersome and frankly, ridiculous."

"Although child protection is supposed to be a systems response, it always comes down to Social Services. We run into difficulties with cooperation both on the front end (with Law Enforcement) and the back end (with the County Attorney's office and our court system). We feel we are fighting a losing battle at times."

"The Governor's Task Force focuses on how bad the CPS system needs to change, however, I have not seen anything that addresses the other main systems that our work is affected by. When a Judge makes decisions that do not take into account the opinions and facts experienced by the social workers involved with families, it has put children directly in harm's way. If something were to happen to the children in those situations, even though it was a Judge who put the children in the situation, it would most likely come directly back on CPS and blame the system for not doing their job. I would like to see a closer look into the systems that make jobs, specifically ongoing child protection case management, unrealistic at times."

"The stress of this position is high, but what makes it unmanageable is the high caseloads which positions social workers as only crisis responders. We go from one crisis to another only having the time and capacity to put band aids on deep social issues and barriers for families,

instead of allowing a manageable case load in which we could provide intensive quality services that help families have a fair shot at working towards distancing themselves from the Child Protection system and gaining well-being for children."

"It seems like a lot of cases/families are falling through the cracks and that the court system is not following timeframes and achieving permanency for kids. Kids and families are getting more complicated than they were before which is creating a harder time meeting timeframes and deadlines because of the complexity."

"Our CP staff members have also implemented a strong campaign with numerous events that takes place every year centered on Child Abuse Prevention because we are dedicated to prevention and early intervention. We are committed to being part of the solution. However, we are now being regulated to the point where efforts focused on prevention and early intervention may go by the wayside due to time constraints."

Flawed policies and too frequent policy changes.

Flaws in policies and too frequent policy changes was the third most significant area of change talked about by child welfare workers within the System Reform theme. Professionals were critical of policy makers for emphasizing the safety of the child over child well-being, and requiring siblings be kept together in the case of permanency. Some professionals suggested the child welfare system is rooted in fear of liability versus a genuine concern for child wellbeing. Professionals also observed that policy changes are so frequent that they hardly feel able to keep up the pace. Below are some comments from professionals who responded to the survey.

"I have to fight every day to remember my social work values and operate according to them. The swing toward safety away from well-being is happening and it is not looking good for families, especially families of color. We will see disparities grow as a result, I'm certain of that."

"I'm disappointed because I know we will return to focusing on well-being again one day--it's disheartening that so many workers will be lost, children and families will be traumatized and taken from each other because the pressure we feel to keep the children physical safe, even when we know the trajectory that path puts them on. I don't know if I want to be a part of that unless my involvement in child protection can be part of the solution."

“Also the database, policies and laws are always changing which makes workers feel as if they never know enough. It also makes us feel like we can never do enough or do it well enough for the federal and State expectations. We also often feel as if we can never catch up on all of the work.”

Poor leadership.

As shown in Figure 9, poor leadership is an area of concern for some professionals. Professionals that highlighted this concern want to see stability in the operations of their agencies, and leadership that knows the job and is willing to stand up to policy-makers regarding decisions about the child protection system. Moreover, they noted they want leaders who can provide support to staff and take action on feedback received from workers rather than make empty promises. For example, one person said,

“The entire system is overwhelmed. [Director] does not seem to have the leadership or experience we need to overcome this. She often bullies, belittles and treats us like children. We are all tired of her Friday 4pm emails before she leaves out the door for the weekend, which are passive aggressive. She does not show her presence or support at our CP Unit....”

Race and culture.

The last subcategory in the System Reform theme concerns race and culture. Professionals that responded to the survey reported that the current child protection interventions are likely to result in further racial disparities. For example, professionals noted concern that the “state” (DHS), legislature, and other government leaders are ill-informed about what child protection entails, especially its intrusive nature to the lives of families. Professionals noted that this intrusion is further perpetrated by the media. They saw negative media publicity as targeting families of color and families of lower economic status. Professionals suggested that the state and counties should implement mandatory cultural sensitivity and racial justice training for both frontline staff and the leadership in DHS, legislature, government leaders, and Counties.

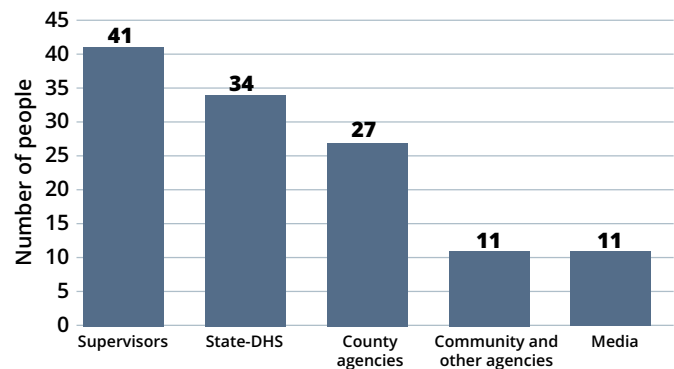
More Support

Child protection professionals shared responses highlighting the need for support from key stakeholders to address problems cited throughout this report. Stakeholders identified by professionals include the state (DHS), county agencies, supervisors, the media, the broader community, and other community agencies. Figure 2 shows that 124 (43%) workers talked about

the need for support from these stakeholders. In fact, stakeholder support was cited 170 times as shown in Figure 3.

As shown in Figure 10, five subcategories emerged in the stakeholder support category. Overall, the three most cited subcategories were support from supervisors (14.3%, n=41), followed by support from DHS (12%, N=34), and support from County agencies (9%, N=27). Support from the media, the community, and other agencies tied in the fourth place (4%, n=11).

Figure 10. Stakeholders to support child protection professionals



Support from Supervisors.

Child protection professionals had mixed responses regarding support from supervisors. While some professionals were concerned with lack of support from their supervisors, others said they feel heard but their supervisors cannot adequately advocate for them because their hands are tied. The professionals who were critical of lack of support from their supervisors believe some of the supervisors lacked knowledge and experience in case management. Professionals also expressed desire for supervisors to treat them fairly and respectfully. Some supervisors who responded to the survey concurred that they are unable to advocate for their staff’s welfare and wellbeing because management in their agencies is not supportive.

“Having a more adequate supervisor. A supervisor who is better trained in child protection, is not making illegal changes to documentation and times in SSIS, a supervisor who treats us fairly and respectfully. It would be great to have a supervisor who checks in on our emotional and mental health and not just our documentation. She does not know how large our caseload is and never recognizes when we are stressed to the point of tears. She does not answer our phone calls and is not willing to help us. We feel lonely in our position to the point of tears in our agency. We close our office doors and sit in our cars and cry.”

"I would be willing to stay in my current position if the work environment was not hostile and the individual in the Social Services Supervisor role was able to support my social work role, advocate for change, and increase their knowledge of the Child Welfare system/requirements as this impedes the work I do. I feel I am directed to do things that are not part of State statute due to the lack of knowledge."

"More supportive Supervisor and Director, who is experienced in Child Protection and who has carried a case load, and who is knowledgeable in SSIS and knows how to use SSIS. Someone who has actually had to do child protection before, case manage a case, and be involved in the entire process. One who can relate to how it feels to remove a child and how to use self-care after wards."

"I am a Supervisor for Child Protection -- Often supervisors are sought out to discuss upcoming changes, help plan for them, deliver the information to staff and then WHAMMO everything changes right before implementation. Management higher than the supervisory role suddenly make sweeping changes to the existing plan and expect for that to be implemented swiftly and without discussion. I have found the most successful way to the LEAD in my agency is to be quiet and FOLLOW. The supervisors in my agency have no ability to protect staff interests and/or well-being and more times than not have to sit silently while their staff drowned."

"I am supervising too many things, but based on our current structure in the County I don't see that changing. My fellow supervisors in different social service areas appear to be content with supervising this high number and higher number of employees and service areas. I don't believe anyone can adequately supervise more than 10 people feeling confident that they are proficient at their job duties and do other administrative work. I also believe that there is a higher level of supervision necessary for CP workers and that is not acknowledged or respected in the agency. Especially among my fellow social service supervisors. I am and have been expected to do more with no compensation for it i.e. raise or additional support."

Support from State – DHS.

As shown in Figure 10, support from the State (DHS) was often cited by professionals as something that would increase their likelihood of staying employed in child welfare work. Professionals expressed desire for allocated funds for hiring to be more transparently utilized, with oversight from the state (DHS). In addition, professionals wanted consistent and open communication between DHS and the counties, particularly

around the state's expectations of county workers and guidance on the new screening criteria. Some professionals reported feeling frustrated with what they perceive as mixed messaging surrounding the screening criteria. Some professionals also expressed that they would like the staff at DHS to better understand what child protection workers do to avoid setting unrealistic expectations or making changes to the system without involving them.

"I would like DHS to do an accountability study to Counties to verify how the allocation monies were used."

"I encourage someone to check with DHS staff into how they are going to assure that the CP Allocation dollars are being spend in accordance with the Vulnerable Children and Adults Act and the report that was sent indicating how the allocation will be spent in each County."

"DHS has done an extremely poor job in the development and roll-out of the new child protection screening criteria. It has totally up-ended our decision-making practices in ways that very negatively affect our work and the effects on families."

"DHS is usually unhelpful to Counties and line workers. They give conflicting answers, or no answers to workers struggling to meet all the timelines and court requirements. DHS appears to be very disconnected with the real world of child protection. Between the federal mandates and the State mandates, it seems impossible to satisfy all the requirements within the specified timelines."

"I think DHS is very top heavy and do [sic] not ask Counties what is needed and how services should be implemented from staff to clients. I do not think DHS has a clue what clients go thru when it takes months to get benefits/ services in place. I think there is a big lack in Mental Health and prevention services."

"My experience with DHS is not always great. Often they are unwilling to provide clear direction, referring us to our agency policy or attorney. Honestly, it is such a hassle to contact DHS staff that I have already done that! Their inability to provide answers is very frustrating. As for the screening hotline...we are supposed to meet a 24 hour deadline to screen, yet, we can't get immediate responses to calls. Very frustrating."

"The lack of respect at the State level for the work being done at the County level is abhorrent. Members of the task force seem to believe that all CP workers are lazy and don't do quality work. While that can certainly be true of some, it is not of all. Members who do not practice and base their judgments on a few interactions that

were more than likely negative had a huge say in what should be done and changed. Change is needed, but so are valued employees. If the general public had any basic understanding of how we are allowed to do our jobs they would be appalled. An example is the impact a voluntary vs. involuntary TPR has on future children of a parent. Making more mandates for workers and not giving them the resources to implement the needed changes ahead of those mandates is ridiculous.”

Support from County Agencies.

Figure 10 shows that support from the county board and administrators was the third most cited concern reported within the theme of More Support. Improving work climate, work wellbeing, and adverse effects of the work on the workers were examples of needed supports from within the county. These concerns were also discussed in previous sections of the report. Overall, professionals noted wanting better pay and benefits, compensation for overtime, on-the-job training and professional development, mutual respect, trust, and better relationships with county agencies and administrators. Some professionals noted a lack of mutual respect from directors, county administration, and County Boards of Commissioners. In addition, some expressed being caught between the County Board of Commissioners’ priority of saving money and the state’s priorities around the placement children.

“We need the support of our agency, commissioners, and community to keep going. Hands on training, staff renewal days, team conferences, and increase in pay are some ways to keep us going. Thanks for gathering this information from those who are on the front line!”

“If the County allowed our Department to be a supportive community for each other and would allow us to know who the others are which we are working cases within the Department rather than separating us all out to multiple work sites and working within pockets of isolation.”

“Our Unit Supervisors are extremely supportive and advocate for the children in our County. However, our County Board and County Administrator office is usually opposed to proposals aimed at strengthening CPS.”

“Instead of receiving support from our county board and administrators we are apprised of the development of new bureaucratic procedures that significantly delay the hiring process in the child protection unit... To increase the likelihood that I will stay in this unit would require immediate relief in the worker/caseload ratio and mutual respect and communication with Human Services county board members, administration and policy makers.”

Community and other agencies.

Support from the community and other agencies was the fourth most common concern for professionals as shown in Figure 10. Professionals expressed concern with the lack of perceived collaboration with other agencies, and the community’s lack of understanding of child protection. Some professionals noted that the general public is uniformed, or even ill-informed about child protection services for children and families. Noteworthy were the comments regarding the needs of the broader community to help protect children, not just child protection fulfilling this community role.

“Thirdly, where is the accountability of other agencies such as schools and hospitals in protecting children? Shouldn’t a school have to inform a parent that they will be reported for educational neglect if the child continues to miss school; can’t a school SW go to the parent’s home and clearly communicate this prior to the school making a CP report. If a child misses medical appointments can’t the Dr., clinic or hospital make a face to face contact to explain that failure to get the child in for medical care will result in a CPS report? Lastly, can’t people (typically relatives, former partners, and landlords) be held criminally and civilly liable for making knowingly false reports? We waste a lot of time investigating malicious reports for people who want to ‘even the score’ or harass a family.”

“We also seem to be accepting cases that are not a child protection issue but rather could be diverted to PSOP or some other community agency or not be accepted at all. Some cases are an absolute waste of time, but counties are being forced to accept reports that simply are not child protection concerns.”

“The general public needs to be educated and also need to learn that it does take a community. Protecting children cannot be done by one person, one organization.”

“If the general public had any basic understanding of how we are allowed to do our jobs they would be appalled. An example is the impact a voluntary vs. involuntary TPR has on future children of a parent. Making more mandates for workers and not giving them to resources to implement the needed changes ahead of those mandates is ridiculous.”

Media.

Media support or lack thereof was cited by professionals as the fifth most important subcategory within the More Support theme as shown in Figure 10. Some professionals were critical of the media’s coverage and representation of child protection. Profession-

als expressed concerns that the media is biased and ill-informed about role and responsibility of child protection. Professionals also noted the imbalance of coverage on negative outcomes of child protection and the failure to highlight the positive elements of the workforce.

“Though the media shed light on what was not happening in some cases, it failed to show how much good the child welfare system is ALSO doing. For those of us in the work, it would be nice to see that side of things sometimes.”

“I work with some of the best people I know and they deeply care about the kids on their caseloads. It would be nice to hear more positive in the media to offset the negative.”

“The media loves to State that the family was ‘known to CPS’ and implies that we either didn’t do our jobs to protect the children or worse yet that we don’t care and now the child is hurt or deceased. I have gotten a traffic ticket in the past, hence I’m ‘known to law enforcement’ and then 2 years later I beat my wife up and the media blames the police because they ‘knew about me???’ – This is insanity – I’m not sure why the State and the media have to try to attribute blame and play ‘Monday Morning Quarterback’ and tell us how to do our jobs. I believe if the legislature, the media and the government leaders were able to follow us around they would agree that what we do is difficult and that we get it right the vast majority of the time. But they would rather focus on the less than 1% of the time and blame and denigrate us and treat us like villains.”

Appendix B4

Region Specific Reports

Region 1 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The Region 1 Quantitative Findings report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 1. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 1.1 shows the personal characteristics of professionals responding to the survey. The majority of Region 1 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (79%). Region 1 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (100%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (100%). In Region 1, 32% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 2% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions was aged 25 or younger, and this was especially true for Region 1 where less than 16% of the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out of every five professionals

(and in some regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; this was not the case for Region 1 where none of the professionals that responded was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 1.1 shows a small proportion of Region 1's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (2%). More than one half of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (52%), with 47% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 5% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training across the state. In Region 1, 6% of professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs.

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

More than half (53%) of Region 1's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 42% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 21% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 1.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 1 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 1.1, one out of every ten professionals (11%) in Region 1's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and over one-third of all professionals in the region (37%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 31% of professionals in Region 1 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

This appendix contains quantitative reports specific to each of Minnesota's 11 regions. To facilitate the use of these reports as free-standing reports by region, the numbering of tables differs from that used in the larger report. Tables are numbered according to region and sequence within that region's report (e.g., Table 1.1 refers the first table in Region 1, Table 1.2 refers to the second table in Region 1).

Table 1.1
Region 1 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	19 (100.0%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	0 (0.0%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	4 (21.1%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	15 (78.9%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	0 (0.0%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	19 (100.0%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	3 (15.8%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	3 (15.8%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	1 (10.5%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	2 (21.1%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	2 (10.5%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	4 (21.1%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	2 (10.5%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	2 (10.5%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	0 (0.0%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree	2 (10.5%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	9 (47.4%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	9 (47.4%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	1 (5.3%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E	1 (5.9%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	2 (10.5%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	2 (10.5%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	3 (15.8)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	2 (10.5%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	0 (0.0%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	1 (5.3%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (5.3%)	29 (4.0%)

13-15 yrs	0 (0.0%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	8 (42.1%)	208 (28.3%)
Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	2 (10.5%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	3 (15.8%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	4 (21.1%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	2 (10.5%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	1 (5.3%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	0 (0.0%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (5.3%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	1 (5.3%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	5 (26.3%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

More than half of Region 1 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (68%) as shown in Table 1.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 1.2 shows that nine out of every ten Region 1 professionals reported (90%) that they had sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 1 professionals overwhelmingly (95%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 1 professionals' responses. Across Region 1, Table 1.2 shows that more than two thirds of all professionals (68%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and half of all professionals (53%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 1 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (79%).

Table 1.2
Region 1 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	13 (68.4%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	17 (89.5%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	13 (68.4%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	10 (52.6%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	18 (94.7%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	15 (78.9%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as *compassion fatigue*, *vicarious trauma*, or *burnout*. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 1, the vast majority of

professionals (83%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with almost half of Region 1 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 1.3. Of great concern for Region 1 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. More than two thirds of Region 1 professionals (71%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 1.3
Region 1 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 1	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=18; n=716)	15 (83.3%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=17; n=684)	7 (41.2%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=17; n=684)	12 (70.6%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 1 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (79%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 1.4, professionals in Region 1 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (84%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (90%). In addition, three out of four Region 1 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, more than half of all Region 1 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance (58%).

Table 1.4
Region 1 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	15 (78.9%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	11 (57.9%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	16 (84.2%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	17 (89.5%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	14 (73.7%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 1.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 1 professionals (95%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. More than two-thirds of Region 1 professionals (79%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 74% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, a majority of Region 1 professionals (58%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (53%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (84%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 1.5
Region 1 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	11 (57.9%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	15 (78.9%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	3 (15.8%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	10 (52.6%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	14 (73.7%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	18 (94.7%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 1.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months half of all Region 1 professionals (53%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 16% of all Region 1 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 1, 37% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 1.6
Region 1 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	9 (47.4%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	7 (36.8%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	3 (15.8%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 1.7, the results of the survey revealed that all participating Region 1 professionals (100%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months.-

Table 1.7
Region 1 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=16)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	16 (100.0%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	0 (0.0%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	0 (0.0%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 1.8 shows the top three factors Region 1 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (100%), fewer administrative requirements (90%), and a tie between lower caseload (79%) and additional professional development opportunities.

Table 1.8.
Region 1 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 1 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	6 (31.6%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	19 (100.0%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	15 (78.9%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	17 (89.5%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	6 (31.6%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	6 (31.6%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	9 (47.4%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	14 (73.7%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	14 (73.7%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	15 (78.9%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 1 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 72% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 72% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 1.9.

Generally, more Region 1 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 78% of Region 1 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 28% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 1 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (67%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (88%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, a majority of Region 1 professionals (78%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 1.9
Region 1 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 1	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=18; n=717)	13 (72.2%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=18; n=718)	13 (72.2%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=18; n=716)	5 (27.8%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=18; n=718)	14 (77.8%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=18; n=715)	12 (66.7%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=18; n=716)	15 (88.3%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=18; n=718)	14 (77.8%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 2 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The Region 2 Quantitative Findings report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 2. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the personal characteristics of professionals responding to the survey. The majority of Region 2 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (87%). Region 2 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (83%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (83%). In Region 2, 23% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 26% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions was aged 25 or younger, this was not true for Region 2 where 0% of

the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; 0% of Region 2 professionals that participated in the survey was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 2.1 shows a small proportion of Region 2's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (19%). One out of eight professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (13%), with 9% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 4% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training across the state. In Region 2, one out of every ten professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (10%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Half (52%) of Region 2s workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 26% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 26% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 2.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 2 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 2.1, one out of every six professionals (17%) in Region 2's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and more than a third of all professionals in the region (39%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies.

Table 2.1
Region 2 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 2 <i>(Sample size, n=23)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	19 (82.6%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	4 (17.4%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	3 (13.0%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	20 (87.0%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	4 (17.4%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	19 (82.6%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	0 (0.0%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	5 (21.7%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	3 (13.0%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	4 (17.4%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	0 (0.0%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	2 (8.7%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	3 (13.0%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	6 (26.1%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	0 (0.0%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree	4 (19.0%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	20 (87.0%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	2 (8.7%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	1 (4.3%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=21; n=714)	2 (9.5%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	1 (4.3%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	5 (21.7%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	1 (4.3%)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	2 (8.7%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	2 (8.7%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	5 (21.7%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (4.3%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	0 (0.0%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	6 (26.1%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	4 (17.4%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	5 (21.7%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	3 (13.0%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	3 (13.0%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	3 (13.0%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	2 (8.7%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	0 (0.0%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	0 (0.0%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	3 (13.0%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

More than half of Region 2 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (78%) as shown in Table 2.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 2.2 shows that one out of every five Region 2 professionals reported (22%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 2 professionals overwhelmingly (100%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 2 professionals' responses. Across Region 2, Table 2.2 shows that more than half of all professionals (65%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and more than a third of all professionals (44%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a majority of all Region 2 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (70%).

Table 2.2
Region 2 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 2 <i>(Sample size, n=23)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	18 (78.3%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	18 (78.3%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	15 (65.2%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	10 (43.5%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	23 (100.0%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	16 (69.6%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 2, the vast majority of professionals (86%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every

three Region 2 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 2.3. Of great concern for Region 2 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. One third of Region 2 professionals (38%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 2.3
Region 2 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 2	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=22; n=716)	19 (86.4%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=20; n=684)	7 (35.0%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=21; n=684)	13 (61.9%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 2 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (87%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 2.4, professionals in Region 2 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (96%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (96%). In addition, a vast majority of Region 2 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services (91%). However, a third of all Region 2 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 2.4
Region 2 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 2 <i>(Sample size, n=23)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	20 (87.0%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	8 (34.8%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	22 (95.7%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	22 (95.7%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	21 (91.3%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 2.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 2 professionals (100%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. More than two thirds of Region 2 professionals (70%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 57% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, a majority of Region 2 professionals (61%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with almost half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (48%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (70%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 2.5
Region 2 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 2 <i>(Sample size, n=23)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	14 (60.9%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	16 (69.6%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	7 (30.4%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	11 (47.8%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	13 (56.5%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	23 (100.0%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 2.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months less than half of all Region 2 professionals (30%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 13% of all Region 2 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 2, 17% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 2.6
Region 2 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 2 (Sample size, n=23)	Statewide (Sample size, n=720)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	16 (69.6%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	4 (17.4%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	3 (13.0%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 2.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 2 professionals (83%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 2, only two professionals intended to move to a position outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency; two additional professionals in Region 2 intended to move to a new position within the field but in a different agency.

Table 2.7
Region 2 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 2 (Sample size, n=23)	Statewide (Sample size, n=700)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	19 (82.6%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	2 (8.7%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	2 (8.7%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 2.8 shows the top three factors Region 2 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (78%), lower caseload (78%), and additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress (78%).

Table 2.8
Region 2 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 2 (Sample size, n=23)	Statewide (Sample size, n=720)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	13 (56.5%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	18 (78.3%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	18 (78.3%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	16 (69.6%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	5 (21.7%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	5 (21.7%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	11 (47.8%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	13 (56.5%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	18 (78.3%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	17 (73.9%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 2 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 96% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 91% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 2.9.

Generally, more Region 2 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 83% of Region 2 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 44% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 2 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (70%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (78%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 2 professionals overwhelmingly (96%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 2.9
Region 2 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 2	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=57; n=717)	22 (95.7%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=57; n=718)	21 (91.3%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=57; n=716)	10 (43.5%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=57; n=718)	19 (82.6%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=23; n=715)	16 (69.6%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=23; n=716)	18 (78.3%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=57; n=718)	22 (95.7%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 3 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The Region 3 Quantitative Findings report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 3. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 3.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 3 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (81%). Region 3 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (90%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (79%). In Region 3, 18% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 21% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions was aged 25 or younger, this was not true for Region 3 where less than 2% of the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; 14% of Region 3 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 3.1 shows a large proportion of Region 3's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (44%). More than one third of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (41%), with 12% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 29% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training (including Region 3). In Region 3, one out of every five professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (23%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (46%) of Region 3's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 25% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 25% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 3.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 3 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 3.1, one out of every eight professionals (13%) in Region 3's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly half of all professionals in the region (40%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 22% of respondents in Region 3 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 3.1
Region 3 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 3 <i>(Sample size, n=58)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	52 (89.7%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	6 (10.3%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	11 (19.0%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	47 (81.0%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	12 (20.7%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	46 (79.3%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	1 (1.7%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	10 (17.2%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	10 (17.2%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	7 (12.1%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	6 (10.3%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	3 (5.2%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	8 (13.8%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	5 (8.6%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	8 (13.8%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree	25 (44.6%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	34 (58.6%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	7 (12.1%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	17 (29.3%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E	13 (23.2%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	5 (8.6%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	10 (17.2%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	6 (10.3)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	5 (8.6%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	4 (6.9%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	5 (8.6%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	5 (8.6%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	3 (5.2%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	15 (25.9%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	8 (13.8%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	16(27.6%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	7 (12.1%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	7 (12.1%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	4 (6.9%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	1 (1.7%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	2 (3.4%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	3 (5.2%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	10 (17.2%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

Less than half of Region 3 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (46%) as shown in Table 3.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 3.2 shows that one out of every three Region 3 professionals reported (35%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 3 professionals overwhelmingly (93%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 3 professionals' responses. Across Region 3, Table 3.2 shows that more than half of all professionals (65%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and half of all professionals (50%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 3 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (81%).

Table 3.2
Region 3 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 3 <i>(Sample size, n=58)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	27 (46.6%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	38 (65.5%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	38 (65.5%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	29 (50.0%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	54 (93.1%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	47 (81.0%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 3, the vast majority of

professionals (87%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every three Region 3 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 3.3. Of great concern for Region 3 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. Two thirds of Region 3 professionals (66%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 3.3
Region 3 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 3	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=56; n=716)	49 (87.5%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=53; n=684)	21 (39.6%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=53; n=684)	35 (66.0%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 3 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (63%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 3.4, professionals in Region 3 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (94%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (87%). In addition, two-thirds of Region 3 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, half of all Region 3 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 3.4
Region 3 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 3 <i>(Sample size, n=58)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	37 (63.8%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	29 (50%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	55 (94.8%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	51 (87.9%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	39 (67.2%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 3.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 3 professionals (94%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. More than half of Region 3 professionals (58%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 58% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, an overwhelming majority of Region 3 professionals (74%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (50%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (88%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 3.5
Region 3 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 3 <i>(Sample size, n=58)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	43 (74.1%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	34 (58.6%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	7 (12.1%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	29 (50.0%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	34 (58.6%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	55 (94.8%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 3.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months less than half of all Region 3 professionals (39%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 24% of all Region 3 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 3, 15% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 3.6
Region 3 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 3 (Sample size, n=58)	Statewide (Sample size, n=720)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	35 (60.3%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	9 (15.5%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	14 (24.1%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 3.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 3 professionals (80%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 3, only one professional intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency. One out of every five professionals in Region 3 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 3.7
Region 3 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 3 (Sample size, n=55)	Statewide (Sample size, n=700)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	44 (80.0%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	1 (1.8%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	10 (18.2%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 3.8 shows the top three factors Region 3 professionals identified as important for retention are fewer administrative requirements (89%), increased salary (82%), and lower caseload (75%).

Table 3.8
Region 3 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 3 (Sample size, n=58)	Statewide (Sample size, n=720)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	11 (19.0%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	48 (82.8%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	44 (75.9%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	52 (89.7%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	21 (36.2%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	26 (44.8%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	39 (67.2%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	36 (62.1%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	35 (60.3%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	37 (63.8%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 3 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 89% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 75% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 3.9.

Generally, more Region 3 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 65% of Region 3 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 30% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 3 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (70%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (70%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 3 professionals overwhelmingly (98%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 3.9
Region 3 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 3	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=57; n=717)	51 (89.5%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=57; n=718)	43 (75.4%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=57; n=716)	17 (29.8%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=57; n=718)	37 (64.9%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=57; n=715)	40 (70.2%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=57; n=716)	41 (71.9%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=57; n=718)	56 (98.2%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 4 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 4 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 4. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 4.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 4 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (88%). Region 4 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (94%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (91%). In Region 4, 30% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 10% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions of Minnesota was aged 25 or younger, and this holds true for Region 4 where 15% of the workforce was in this age range. Conversely, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one out of every

four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; however, only 6% of Region 4 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 4.1 shows one out of five of Region 4's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (20%). More than two-thirds of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (72%), with 63% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 5% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training in Minnesota. In Region 4, one out of every five professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (24%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

One third (34%) of Region 4's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 22% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 35% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 4.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 4 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 4.1, one out of every five professionals (20%) in Region 4's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly half of all professionals in the region (44%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, Table 4.1 shows that 15% of respondents in Region 4 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 4.1
Region 4 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=54)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	51 (94.4%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	3 (5.6%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	6 (11.1%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	48 (88.0%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	5 (9.3%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	49 (90.7%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	8 (14.8%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	8 (14.8%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	11 (20.4%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	8 (14.8%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	5 (9.3%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	4 (7.4%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	5 (9.3%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	2 (3.7%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	3 (5.6%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree	11 (20.4%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	15 (27.8%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	34 (63.0%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	5 (9.3%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=54, n=714)	13 (24.1%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	8 (14.8%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	11 (20.4%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	8 (14.8)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	4 (7.4%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	5 (9.3%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	2 (3.7%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (1.9%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	3 (5.6%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	12 (22.2%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	11 (20.4%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	13 (24.1%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	9 (16.7%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	2 (3.7%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	8 (14.8%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	2 (3.7%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (1.9%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	2 (3.7%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	6 (11.1%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

More than half of Region 4 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (61%) as shown in Table 4.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 4.2 shows that one out of every four Region 4 professionals reported (24%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 4 professionals overwhelmingly (98%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 4 professionals' responses. Across Region 4, Table 4.2 shows that more than two thirds of all professionals (70%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and over one third of all professionals (39%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 4 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (83%).

Table 4.2
Region 4 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=54)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	33 (61.1%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	41 (75.9%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	38 (70.4%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	21 (38.9%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	53 (98.1%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	45 (83.3%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as *compassion fatigue*, *vicarious trauma*, or *burnout*. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption,

and permanency. In Region 4, the vast majority of professionals (77%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with nearly half of Region 4 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 4.3. Of great concern for Region 4 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. More than half of Region 4 professionals (57%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 4.3
Region 4 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 4	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=52; n=716)	40 (76.9%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=49; n=684)	23 (46.9%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=51; n=684)	29 (56.9%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a vast majority of Region 4 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (91%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 4.4, professionals in Region 4 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (100%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (98%). In addition, nine out of ten of Region 4 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, almost half of all Region 4 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 4.4
Region 4 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=54)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	49 (90.7%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	24 (44.4%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	54 (100.0%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	53 (98.1%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	49 (90.7%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 4.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 4 professionals (96%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. More than half of Region 4 professionals (69%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 56% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, a majority of Region 4 professionals (63%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with almost half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (44%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (83%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 4.5
Region 4 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=54)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	34 (63.0%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	37 (68.5%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	9 (16.7%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	24 (44.4%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	30 (55.6%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	52 (96.3%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 4.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months more than half of all Region 4 professionals (56%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. Of all Region 4 professionals, 30% actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 4, 26% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 4.6
Region 4 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=54)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	24 (44.4%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	14 (25.9%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	16 (29.6%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 4.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 4 professionals (74%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 4, only 7% of professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed. One out of every six professionals in Region 4 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 4.7
Region 4 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=54)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	40 (74.1%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	4 (7.4%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	10 (18.5%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 4.8 shows the top three factors Region 4 professionals identified as important for retention are lower caseload (89%), increased salary (83%), and fewer administrative requirements (82%).

Table 4.8
Region 4 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 4 <i>(Sample size, n=48)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	20 (37.0%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	45 (83.3%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	48 (88.9%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	44 (81.5%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	13 (24.1%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	18 (33.3%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	30 (55.6%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	24 (44.4%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	37 (68.5%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	34 (63.0%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 4 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 87% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 80% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 4.9.

Generally, more Region 4 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 74% of Region 4 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 24% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 4 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (70%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (74%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 4 professionals overwhelmingly (98%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 4.9
Region 4 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 4	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=54; n=717)	47 (87.0%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=54; n=718)	43 (79.6%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=54; n=716)	13 (24.1%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=54; n=718)	40 (74.1%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=53; n=715)	36 (67.9%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=53; n=716)	39 (73.6%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=54; n=718)	53 (98.1%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 5 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 5 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 5. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 5.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 5 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (82%). Region 5 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (94%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (88%). In Region 5, 27% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 21% reported being 56 years or older. One out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions was aged 25 or younger, as was the case for Region 5 where 15% of the workforce was in this age range. One out of every five professionals (and in some

regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; however, only 3% of Region 5 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 5.1 shows a small proportion of Region 5's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (3%). More than half of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (55%), with 52% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 3% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work in Minnesota tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training. In Region 5, one out of every ten professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (10%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Half (51%) of Region 5's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 39% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 27% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 5.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 5 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 5.1, one out of every five professionals (18%) in Region 5's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly one-third of all professionals in the region (30%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 36% of respondents in Region 5 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 5.1
Region 5 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 5 <i>(Sample size, n=33)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	31 (93.9%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	2 (6.1%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	6 (18.2%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	27 (81.8%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	4 (12.1%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	29 (87.9%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	5 (15.2%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	4 (12.1%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	3 (9.1%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	7 (21.2%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	2 (6.1%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	3 (9.1%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	2 (6.1%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	6 (18.2%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	1 (3.0%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree <i>(n=31, n=714)</i>	1 (3.2%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	15 (45.5%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	17 (51.5%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	1 (3.0%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=31, n=714)	3 (9.7%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	4 (12.1%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	5 (15.2%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	5 (15.2%)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	2 (6.1%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	0 (0.0%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	0 (0.0%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (3.0%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	3 (9.1%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	13 (39.4%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	6 (18.2%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	4 (12.1%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	5 (15.2%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	1 (3.0%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	1 (3.0%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	3 (9.1%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (3.0%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	3 (9.1%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	9 (27.3%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

A majority of Region 5 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (76%) as shown in Table 5.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 5.2 shows that one out of every three Region 5 professionals reported (30%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 5 professionals overwhelmingly (100%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 5 professionals' responses. Across Region 5, Table 5.2 shows that more than half of all professionals (55%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and one-third of all professionals (36%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, more than half of all Region 5 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (61%).

Table 5.2.
Region 5 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 5 <i>(Sample size, n=33)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	25 (75.8%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	23 (69.7%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	18 (54.5%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	12 (36.4%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	33 (100.0%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	20 (60.6%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as *compassion fatigue*, *vicarious trauma*, or *burnout*. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption,

and permanency. In Region 5, the vast majority of professionals (85%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every three Region 5 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 5.3. Of great concern for Region 5 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. One third of Region 5 professionals (37%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 5.3
Region 5 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 5	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=33; n=716)	28 (84.8%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=31; n=684)	12 (38.7%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=30; n=684)	19 (63.3%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 5 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (88%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 5.4, professionals in Region 4 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (97%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (94%). In addition, the vast majority of Region 5 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, almost half of all Region 5 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 5.4
Region 5 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 5	Statewide
	(Sample size, n=33)	(Sample size, n=734)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	29 (87.9%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	16 (48.5%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	32 (97.0%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	31 (93.9%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	30 (90.9%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 5.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 5 professionals (97%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. Two-thirds of Region 5 professionals (67%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 70% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, an overwhelming majority of Region 5 professionals (73%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with almost two thirds of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (64%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (79%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 5.5
Region 5 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 5	Statewide
	(Sample size, n=33)	(Sample size, n=734)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	24 (72.7%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	22 (66.7%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	7 (21.2%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	21 (63.6%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	23 (69.7%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	32 (97.0%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 5.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months almost half of all Region 5 professionals (48%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 24% of all Region 5 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 5, 24% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 5.6
Region 5 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 5 <i>(Sample size, n=33)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	17 (51.5%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	8 (24.2%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	8 (24.2%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 5.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 5 professionals (79%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 5, no professionals of professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed. One out of every five professionals in Region 5 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 5.7
Region 5 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 5 <i>(Sample size, n=33)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	26 (78.8%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	0 (0.0%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	7 (21.2%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 5.8 shows the top three factors Region 5 professionals identified as important for retention are fewer administrative requirements (85%), increased salary (79%), and lower caseload (76%).

Table 5.8
Region 5 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 5 <i>(Sample size, n=33)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	8 (24.2%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	26 (78.8%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	25 (75.8%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	28 (84.8%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	9 (27.3%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	13 (39.4%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	21 (63.6%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	19 (57.6%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	22 (66.7%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	22 (66.7%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 5 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 91% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 79% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 5.9.

Generally, more Region 5 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 82% of Region 5 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 42% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 5 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (64%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (73%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 5 professionals overwhelmingly (97%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 5.9
Region 5 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 5	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=33; n=717)	30 (90.9%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=33; n=718)	26 (78.8%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=33; n=716)	14 (42.4%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=33; n=718)	27 (81.8%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=33; n=715)	21 (63.6%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=33; n=716)	24 (72.7%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=33; n=718)	32 (97.0%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 6 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 6 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 6. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 6.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 6 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (79%). Region 6 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (98%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (98%). In Region 6, 27% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 6% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions of Minnesota was aged 25 or younger; for Region 6, 10% of the workforce was in this age range. Conversely, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one out of every four professionals)

was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; however, only 4% of Region 6 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 6.1 shows a small proportion of Region 6's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (4%). Almost two-thirds of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (60%), with 58% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 2% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education in Minnesota, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training. In Region 6, 6% of professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs.

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

One-third (35%) of Region 6's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 23% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 35% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 6.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 6 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 6.1, one out of every three professionals (33%) in Region 6's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly half of all professionals in the region (47%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 16% of respondents in Region 6 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 6.1
Region 6 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=48)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	47 (97.9%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	1 (2.1%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	10 (20.8%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	38 (79.2%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	1 (2.1%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	47 (97.9%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	5 (10.4%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	8 (16.7%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	13 (27.1%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	3 (6.3%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	4 (8.3%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	7 (14.6%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	5 (10.4%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	1 (2.1%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	2 (4.2%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree <i>(n=47, n=715)</i>	2 (4.3%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	19 (39.6%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	28 (58.3%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	1 (2.1%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=47, n=714)	3 (6.4%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	12 (25.0%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	5 (10.4%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	7 (14.6%)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	3 (6.3%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	4 (8.3%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	2 (4.2%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	3 (6.3%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	1 (2.1%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	11 (22.9%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	16 (33.3%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	7 (14.6%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	9 (18.8%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	3 (6.3%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	1 (2.1%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	1 (2.1%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	3 (6.3%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	1 (2.1%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	7 (14.6%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

A vast majority of Region 6 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (83%) as shown in Table 6.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 6.2 shows that one out of every four Region 6 professionals reported (23%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 6 professionals overwhelmingly (98%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 6 professionals' responses. Across Region 6, Table 6.2 shows that two-thirds of all professionals (67%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and over half of all professionals (56%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 6 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (75%).

Table 6.2
Region 6 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=48)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	40 (83.3%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	37 (77.1%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	32 (66.7%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	27 (56.3%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	47 (97.9%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	36 (75.0%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 6, the vast majority of professionals (87%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every five

Region 6 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 6.3. Of great concern for Region 6 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. One out of four of Region 6 professionals (23%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 6.3
Region 6 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 6	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=47; n=716)	41 (87.2%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=45; n=684)	10 (22.2%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=44; n=684)	34 (77.3%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 6 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (88%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 6.4, professionals in Region 6 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (94%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (98%). In addition, a vast majority of Region 6 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services (81%). However, almost half of all Region 6 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 6.4
Region 6 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=48)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	42 (87.5%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	22 (45.8%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	45 (93.8%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	47 (97.9%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	39 (81.3%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 6.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 6 professionals (98%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. A vast majority of Region 6 professionals (79%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 71% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, an half of Region 6 professionals (50%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with more than half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (60%). Unsurprisingly, a majority of professionals (69%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 6.5
Region 6 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=48)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	24 (50.0%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	38 (79.2%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	15 (31.3%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	29 (60.4%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	34 (70.8%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	47 (97.9%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 6.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months less than half of all Region 6 professionals (43%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 20% of all Region 6 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 6, 24% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 6.6
Region 6 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=46)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	26 (56.5%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	11 (23.9%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	9 (19.6%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 6.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 6 professionals (89%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 6, only two professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed; three profession professionals in Region 6 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 6.7
Region 6 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=44)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	39 (88.6%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	2 (4.5%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	3 (6.8%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 6.8 shows the top three factors Region 6 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (98%), fewer administrative requirements (89%), and lower caseload (89%).

Table 6.8
Region 6 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 6 <i>(Sample size, n=46)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	27 (58.7%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	45 (97.8%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	41 (89.1%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	41 (89.1%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	14 (30.4%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	12 (26.1%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	27 (58.7%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	27 (58.7%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	33 (71.7%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	37 (80.4%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 6 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 89% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 80% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 6.9.

Generally, more Region 6 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 80% of Region 6 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 33% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 6 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (80%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (83%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 6 professionals overwhelmingly (94%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 6.9
Region 6 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 6	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=46; n=717)	41 (89.1%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=46; n=718)	37 (80.4%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=46; n=716)	15 (32.6%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=46; n=718)	37 (80.4%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=46; n=715)	37 (80.4%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=46; n=716)	38 (82.6%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=46; n=718)	43 (93.5%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 7 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 7 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 7. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 7.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 7 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (85%). Region 7 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (94%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (90%). In Region 7, 22% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 13% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions of Minnesota was aged 25 or younger, this was not true for Region 7 where 7% of the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one

out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; 5% of Region 7 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 7.1 shows a significant proportion of Region 7's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (28%). More than half of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (56%), with 39% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 17% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education in Minnesota, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training. In Region 7, one out of every seven professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (14%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (46%) of Region 7's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 22% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 24% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 7.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 7 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 7.1, one out of every seven professionals (14%) in Region 7's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly half of all professionals in the region (44%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 15% of respondents in Region 7 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 7.1
Region 7 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 7 <i>(Sample size, n=111)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	104 (93.7%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	7 (6.3%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	17 (15.3%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	94 (84.7%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	11 (9.9%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	100 (90.1%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	8 (7.2%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	16 (14.4%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	19 (17.1%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	22 (19.8%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	14 (12.6%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	13 (11.7%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	5 (4.5%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	9 (8.1%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	5 (4.5%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree <i>(n=107, n=715)</i>	30 (28.0%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	49 (44.1%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	43 (38.7%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	19 (17.1%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=107, n=714)	15 (14.0%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	9 (8.1%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	18 (16.2%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	15 (13.5)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	10 (9.0%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	9 (8.1%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	14 (12.6%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	2 (1.8%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	10 (9.0%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	24 (21.6%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	16 (14.4%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	33 (29.7%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	14 (12.6%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	6 (5.4%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	14 (12.6%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	11 (9.9%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (0.9%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	2 (1.8%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	14 (12.6%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

Approximately one out of three Region 7 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (38%) as shown in Table 7.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 7.2 shows that more than one-third of Region 7 professionals reported (40%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 7 professionals overwhelmingly (96%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 7 professionals' responses. Across Region 7, Table 7.2 shows that more than half of all professionals (53%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and one-third of all professionals (35%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 7 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (74%).

Table 7.2
Region 7 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 7 <i>(Sample size, n=111)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	69 (62.2%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	66 (59.5%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	59 (53.2%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	39 (35.1%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	107 (96.4%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	82 (73.9%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as *compassion fatigue*, *vicarious trauma*, or *burnout*. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 7, the vast majority of professionals (86%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with almost half of Region 7 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 7.3. Of great concern for Region 7 is

the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. One third of Region 7 professionals (34%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 7.3
Region 7 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 7	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=110; n=716)	94 (85.5%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=106; n=684)	45 (42.5%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=103; n=684)	68 (66.0%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 7 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (69%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 7.4, professionals in Region 7 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (94%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (81%). In addition, over two-thirds of Region 7 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, half of all Region 7 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 7.4
Region 7 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 7	Statewide
	<i>(Sample size, n=111)</i>	<i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	76 (68.5%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	60 (54.1%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	104 (93.7%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	90 (81.1%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	79 (71.2%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 7.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 7 professionals (92%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. Half of Region 7 professionals (50%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 39% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, a majority of Region 7 professionals (56%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (54%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (84%) did not believe that the public held their work

in high esteem.

Table 7.5
Region 7 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 7	Statewide
	<i>(Sample size, n=111)</i>	<i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	62 (55.9%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	55 (49.5%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	18 (16.2%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	60 (54.1%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	43 (38.7%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	102 (91.9%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 7.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months more than half of all Region 7 professionals (59%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 19% of all Region 7 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 7, 40% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 7.6
Region 7 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 7 <i>(Sample size, n=106)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	44 (41.5%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	42 (39.6%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	20 (18.9%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 7.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 7 professionals (85%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 7, only one out of ten professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed; 5% professionals in Region 7 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 7.7
Region 7 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 7 <i>(Sample size, n=103)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	88 (85.4%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	10 (9.7%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	5 (4.9%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 7.8 shows the top three factors Region 7 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (92%), lower caseload (85%), and additional professional development opportunities (84%).

Table 7.8
Region 7 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 7 <i>(Sample size, n=106)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	41 (38.7%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	97 (91.5%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	90 (84.9%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	88 (83.0%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	36 (34.0%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	53 (50.0%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	67 (63.2%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	70 (66.0%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	78 (73.6%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	89 (84.0%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 7 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 88% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 76% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 7.9.

Generally, more Region 7 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 64% of Region 7 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 43% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 7 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (64%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (70%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 7 professionals overwhelmingly (96%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 7.9
Region 7 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 7	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=106; n=717)	93 (87.7%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=106; n=718)	80 (75.5%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=106; n=716)	46 (43.4%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=106; n=718)	68 (64.2%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=106; n=715)	68 (64.2%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=106; n=716)	74 (69.8%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=106; n=718)	102 (96.2%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 8 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 8 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 8. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 8.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 8 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (90%). Region 8 professionals that responded to the survey overwhelmingly identified as White (100%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (90%). In Region 8, 26% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 11% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions of Minnesota was aged 25 or younger; this was similar for Region 8 where 11% of the workforce was in this age range. Conversely, one out of every five professionals (and

in some regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; however, none of the professionals from Region 8 was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 8.1 shows almost a large proportion quarter of Region 8's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (22%). A vast majority of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (63%), with 37% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 16% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training. In Region 8, 6% of professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs.

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (47%) of Region 8's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 26% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 37% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 8.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 8 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 8.1, one out of every four professionals (26%) in Region 8's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and one-third of all professionals in the region (37%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 16% of respondents in Region 8 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 8.1
Region 8 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	19 (100.0%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	0 (0.0%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	2 (10.5%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	17 (89.5%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	2 (10.5%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	17 (89.5%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	2 (10.5%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	3 (15.8%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	5 (26.3%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	1 (5.3%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	4 (21.1%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	1 (5.3%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	1 (5.3%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	2 (10.5%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	0 (0.0%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree <i>(n=18, n=715)</i>	4 (22.2%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	7 (36.8%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	9 (47.4%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	3 (15.8%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=18, n=714)	1 (5.6%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	4 (21.1%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	3 (15.8%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	0 (0.0)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	3 (15.8%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	0 (0.0%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	3 (15.8%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (5.3%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	0 (0.0%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	5 (26.3%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	5 (26.3%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	2 (10.5%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	1 (5.3%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	4 (21.1%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	0 (0.0%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	2 (10.5%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	2 (10.5%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	1 (5.3%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	2 (10.5%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

A majority of Region 8 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (74%) as shown in Table 8.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 8.2 shows that one out of every three Region 8 professionals reported (32%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 8 professionals overwhelmingly (100%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was largely consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 8 professionals' responses. Across Region 8, Table 8.2 shows that two thirds of professionals (66%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and a quarter of all professionals (26%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 8 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (74%).

Table 8.2
Region 8 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	14 (73.7%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	16 (68.4%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	13 (65.5%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	5 (26.3%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	19 (100.0%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	14 (73.7%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 8, the vast majority of professionals (78%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every three Region 8 professionals reporting that these ex-

periences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 8.3. Of great concern for Region 8 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. One out of every five Region 8 professionals (22%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 8.3
Region 8 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 8	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=18; n=716)	14 (77.8%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=18; n=684)	6 (33.3%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=18; n=684)	14 (77.8%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 8 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (74%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 8.4, professionals in Region 8 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (100%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (95%). In addition, a vast majority of Region 8 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, almost half of all Region 8 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 8.4
Region 8 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	14 (73.7%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	9 (47.4%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	19 (100.0%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	18 (94.7%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	16 (84.2%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 8.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 8 professionals (95%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. An overwhelming majority of Region 8 professionals (95%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 47% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, more than half of Region 8 professionals (68%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (53%). Unsurprisingly, a majority of professionals (63%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 8.5
Region 8 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	13 (68.4%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	18 (94.7%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	7 (36.8%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	10 (52.6%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	9 (47.4%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	18 (94.7%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 8.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months more than half of all Region 8 professionals (63%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 26% of all Region 8 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 8, 37% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 8.6
Region 8 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	7 (36.8%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	7 (36.8%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	5 (26.3%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 8.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 8 professionals (94%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 8, none of the professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed. One professional in Region 8 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 8.7
Region 8 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=18)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	17 (94.4%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	0 (0.0%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	1 (5.6%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 8.8 shows the top three factors Region 8 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (95%), and lower caseload (95%), and additional professional development opportunities (74%).

Table 8.8
Region 8 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 8 <i>(Sample size, n=19)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	8 (42.1%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	18 (94.7%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	18 (94.7%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	13 (68.4%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	6 (31.6%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	8 (42.1%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	12 (63.2%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	11 (57.9%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	12 (63.2%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	14 (73.7%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 8 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 95% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 84% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 8.9.

Generally, more Region 8 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 79% of Region 8 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 42% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 8 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (68%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (74%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 8 professionals overwhelmingly (100%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 8.9
Region 8 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 8	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=19; n=717)	18 (94.7%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=19; n=718)	16 (84.2%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=19; n=716)	8 (42.1%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=19; n=718)	15 (78.9%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=19; n=715)	13 (68.4%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=19; n=716)	14 (73.7%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=19; n=718)	19 (100.0%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 9 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 9 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 9. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 9.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 9 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (85%). Region 9 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (100%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (94%). In Region 9, 32% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 6% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions of Minnesota was aged 25 or younger, this was not true for Region 9 where 12% of the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out of every five professionals (and in some regions, one

out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; however, 0% of Region 9 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 9.1 shows a large proportion of Region 9's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (38%). More than one third of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (36%), with 21% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 15% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training. In Region 9, 9% of professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs.

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (50%) of Region 9's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 35% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 32% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 9.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 9 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 9.1, one out of every eight professionals (21%) in Region 9's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly half of all professionals in the region (44%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 35% of respondents in Region 9 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 9.1
Region 9 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 9 <i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	34 (100.0%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	0 (0.0%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	5 (14.7%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	29 (85.3%)	624 (85%)
Gender		
Male	2 (5.9%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	32 (94.1%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	4 (11.8%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	7 (20.6%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	2 (5.9%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	3 (8.8%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	10 (29.4%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	4 (11.8%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	2 (5.9%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	2 (5.9%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	0 (0.0%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree <i>(n=34, n=715)</i>	13 (38.2%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	22 (64.7%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	7 (20.6%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	5 (14.7%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=34, n=714)	3 (8.8%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	5 (14.7%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	6 (17.6%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	4 (11.8%)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	2 (5.9%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	0 (0.0%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	1 (2.9%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (2.9%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	3 (8.8%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	12 (35.3%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	7 (20.6%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	8 (23.5%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	4 (11.8%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	1 (2.9%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	0 (0.0%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	1 (2.9%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	1 (2.9%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	3 (8.8%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	9 (26.5%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

More than half of Region 9 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (74%) as shown in Table 9.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 9.2 shows that one out of every three Region 9 professionals reported (38%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 9 professionals overwhelmingly (100%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was largely consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 9 professionals' responses. Across Region 9, Table 9.2 shows that half of all professionals (50%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and almost a third of professionals (29%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 9 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (71%).

Table 9.2
Region 9 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 9 <i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	25 (73.5%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	21 (61.8%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	17 (50.0%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	10 (29.4%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	34 (100.0%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	24 (70.6%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 9, the vast majority of professionals (84%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every

three Region 9 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 9.3. Of great concern for Region 9 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. Almost half of Region 9 professionals (47%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 9.3
Region 9 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 9	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=32; n=716)	27 (84.4%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=31; n=684)	11 (35.5%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=30; n=684)	16 (53.3%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 9 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (77%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 9.4, professionals in Region 9 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (97%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (88%). In addition, two-thirds of Region 9 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, more than half of all Region 9 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 9.4
Region 9 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 9	Statewide
	<i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	<i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	26 (76.5%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	19 (55.9%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	33 (97.1%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	30 (88.2%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	21 (61.8%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 9.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 9 professionals (100%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. More than half of Region 9 professionals (59%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 50% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. In Region 9, only 27% of professionals noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, however, almost half of all professionals stated that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (41%). Unsurprisingly, the majority of professionals (65%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 9.5
Region 9 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 9	Statewide
	<i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	<i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	9 (26.5%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	20 (58.8%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	12 (35.3%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	14 (41.2%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	17 (50.0%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	34 (100.0%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 9.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months half of all Region 9 professionals (53%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 15% of all Region 9 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 9, 38% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 9.6
Region 9 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 9 <i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	16 (47.1%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	13 (38.2%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	5 (14.7%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 9.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 9 professionals (88%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 9, only one professional intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed; three professionals (8%) in Region 9 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 9.7
Region 9 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 9 <i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	30 (88.2%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	1 (2.9%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	3 (8.8%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 9.8 shows the top three factors Region 9 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (94%), lower caseload (79%), and fewer administrative requirements (79%).

Table 9.8
Region 9 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 9 <i>(Sample size, n=34)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	10 (29.4%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	32 (94.1%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	27 (79.4%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	27 (79.4%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	9 (26.5%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	16 (47.1%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	19 (55.9%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	22 (64.7%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	25 (73.5%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	25 (73.5%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 9 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 79% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 68% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 9.9.

Generally, more Region 9 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 74% of Region 9 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 44% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 9 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (65%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (71%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 9 professionals overwhelmingly (91%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

W

Table 9.9
Region 9 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 9	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=57; n=717)	27 (79.4%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=57; n=718)	23 (67.6%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=57; n=716)	15 (44.1%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=34; n=718)	25 (73.5%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=34; n=715)	22 (64.7%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=34; n=716)	24 (70.6%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=34; n=718)	31 (91.2%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 10 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 10 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 10. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 10.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 10 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (84%). Region 10 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (90%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (84%). In Region 10, 19% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 10% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions was aged 25 or younger, this was not true for Region 10 where less than 4% of the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out

of every five professionals (and in some regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and northeast regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; 6% of Region 10 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 10.1 shows a large proportion of Region 10's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (37%). More than one third of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (59%), with 39% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 20% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training (including Region 10). In Region 10, one out of every six professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (16%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (42%) of Region 10's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 28% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 29% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 10.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 10 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 10.1, one out of every four professionals (26%) in Region 10's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and nearly half of all professionals in the region (42%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 22% of respondents in Region 10 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 10.1
Region 10 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 10 <i>(Sample size, n=108)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	97 (89.8%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	11 (10.2%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position		
Supervisor	17 (15.7%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	91 (84.3%)	624 (85%)
Gender (n =107, n=732)		
Male	17 (15.9%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	90 (84.1%)	638 (86.9%)
Age		
20-25 yrs	4 (3.7%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	16 (14.8%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	20 (18.5%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	15 (13.9%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	21 (19.4%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	12 (11.1%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	10 (9.3%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	4 (3.7%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	6 (5.6%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree (n=106, n=715)	39 (36.8%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree		
No SW Degree	44 (40.7%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	42 (38.9%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	22 (20.4%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=106, n=714)	17 (16.0%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure		
< 1 yr	19 (17.6%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	12 (11.1%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	16 (14.8%)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	11 (10.2%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	5 (4.6%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	9 (8.3%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	3 (2.8%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	3 (2.8%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	30 (27.8%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure		
< 1 yr	28 (25.9%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	17 (15.7%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	16 (14.8%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	11 (10.2%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	3 (2.8%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	7 (6.5%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	2 (1.9%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	2 (1.9%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	22 (20.4%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

More than three-quarters of Region 10 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (80%) as shown in Table 10.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 10.2 shows that one out of every six Region 10 professionals reported (18%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 10 professionals overwhelmingly (99%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 10 professionals' responses. Across Region 10, Table 10.2 shows that more than half of all professionals (54%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and one-third of all professionals (34%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a majority of all Region 10 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (57%).

Table 10.2
Region 10 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 10 <i>(Sample size, n=108)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	86 (79.6%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	89 (82.4%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	58 (53.7%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	37 (34.3%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	107 (99.1%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	62 (57.4%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burnout**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 10, the vast majority of professionals (79%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every four

Region 10 professionals reporting that these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 10.3. Of great concern for Region 10 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. One-third of Region 10 professionals (30%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 10.3
Region 10 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 10	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=107; n=716)	84 (78.5%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=106; n=684)	28 (26.4%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=105; n=684)	73 (69.5%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 10 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (86%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 10.4, professionals in Region 10 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (92%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (93%). In addition, a vast majority of Region 10 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services (89%). However, one-third of all Region 10 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 10.4
Region 10 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 10 <i>(Sample size, n=108)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	93 (86.1%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	37 (34.3%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	99 (91.7%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	100 (92.6%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	96 (88.9%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 10.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 10 professionals (96%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. A significant majority of Region 10 professionals (73%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 65% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, almost half of Region 10 professionals (46%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance. Similarly, half of all professionals stated that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (49%). Unsurprisingly, a majority of professionals (66%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 10.5
Region 10 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 10 <i>(Sample size, n=108)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	50 (46.3%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	79 (73.1%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	37 (34.3%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	53 (49.1%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	70 (64.8%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	104 (96.3%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 10.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months half of all Region 10 professionals (50%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 19% of all Region 10 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 10, 31% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 10.6
Region 10 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 10 (Sample size, n=105)	Statewide (Sample size, n=720)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	53 (50.5%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	32 (30.5%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	20 (19.0%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 10.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 10 professionals (87%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 10, only five professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed. One out of every thirteen professionals in Region 10 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 10.7
Region 10 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 10 (Sample size, n=103)	Statewide (Sample size, n=700)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	90 (87.4%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	5 (4.9%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	8 (7.8%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 10.8 shows the top three factors Region 10 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (84%), fewer administrative requirements (81%), and lower caseload (79%).

Table 10.8
Region 10 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 10 (Sample size, n=105)	Statewide (Sample size, n=720)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	36 (34.3%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	88 (83.8%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	83 (79.0%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	85 (81.0%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	39 (37.1%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	39 (37.1%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	63 (60.0%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	55 (52.4%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	62 (59.0%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	73 (69.5%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 10 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 78% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 66% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 10.9.

Generally, more Region 10 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 78% of Region 10 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 39% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 10 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (78%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (78%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 10 professionals overwhelmingly (91%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 10.9
Region 10 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 10	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=105; n=717)	82 (78.1%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=105; n=718)	69 (65.7%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=104; n=716)	41 (39.4%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=105; n=718)	82 (78.1%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=104; n=715)	81 (77.9%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=105; n=716)	82 (78.1%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=105; n=718)	96 (91.4%)	678 (94.4%)

Region 11 Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners during a time of system reform, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare partnered with the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and representatives of the Child Safety and Permanency Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to carry out the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study. The **Region 11 Quantitative Findings** report provides descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency in Region 11. It is important to note that one of the main goals of the study was to understand factors that may contribute to workforce instability; thus this report highlights these factors and in doing so does not necessarily acknowledge the strengths of the system and its workforce. Statewide findings are presented for context throughout the report.

Personal Characteristics

Table 11.1 shows the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. The majority of Region 11 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, and adoption and permanency that responded to the 2016 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey were working in front-line positions (87%). Region 11 professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (84%). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (84%). In Region 11, 22% of the workforce reported being 30 years or younger, and 12% reported being 56 years or older. It is important to note that while one out of every eight professionals in the more rural regions of Minnesota was aged 25 or younger, this was not true for Region 11 where less than 5% of the workforce was in this age range. Similarly, one out of every five professionals (and in some

regions, one out of every four professionals) was aged 60 or older in Minnesota's north central and north-east regions, suggesting that the workforce may be on the verge of experiencing significant turnover due to retirement; 5% of Region 11 professionals was age 60 or older.

Educational Background

Table 11.1 shows a large proportion of Region 11's workforce reported having earned graduate degrees (60%). More than one third of all professionals in the workforce were trained specifically in social work (61%), with 16% reporting their highest social work degree as BSW and 45% reporting having earned an MSW. Regions with institutions of higher education in Minnesota, and particularly those that offered degrees in social work tended to have the highest proportions of professionals with advanced educational training (including Region 11). In Region 11, one out of every six professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs (18%).

Tenure in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, and Adoption/Permanency

Almost half (48%) of Region 11's workforce has been in the CP/IFC/A/P field for nine or more years (with 32% reporting tenure of 15 or more years); however, 32% of the workforce has been in the field for two years or less as shown in Table 11.1.

Time in Current Position

While the levels of tenure reported by Region 11 professionals indicate an experienced workforce, recent turnover and hiring within the field is also evident. As shown in Table 11.1, one out of every three professionals (30%) in Region 11's child protection system has been in his/her current position less than one year and half of all professionals in the region (50%) has been in his/her current position for two years or less. These trends reveal that many professionals were fairly new to their positions and/or agencies. On the other hand, 23% of respondents in Region 11 have been in their current position for 13 or more years.

Table 11.1
Region 11 and Statewide Personal Characteristics.

	Region 11 (Sample size, n=227)	Statewide (Sample size, n=734)
	Number Percentage	Number (Percentage)
Race/Ethnicity (n=227, n=733)		
White	190 (83.7%)	663 (90.3%)
Professional of Color	37 (16.3%)	71 (9.7%)
Work Position (n=227, n=734)		
Supervisor	29 (12.8%)	110 (15%)
Front Line Staff	198 (87.2%)	624 (85%)
Gender (n=226, n=732)		
Male	36 (15.9%)	94 (12.8%)
Female	190 (84.1%)	638 (86.9%)
Age (n=XXX, n=734)		
20-25 yrs	9 (4.0%)	49 (6.7%)
26-30 yrs	40 (17.6%)	120 (16.3%)
31-35 yrs	30 (13.2%)	117 (15.9%)
36-40 yrs	33 (14.5%)	105 (14.3%)
41-45 yrs	36 (15.9%)	104 (14.2%)
46-50 yrs	30 (13.2%)	83 (11.3%)
51-55 yrs	25 (11.0%)	68 (9.3%)
56-60 yrs	13 (5.7%)	52 (7.1%)
Over 60 yrs	11 (4.8%)	36 (4.9%)
Graduate Degree (n=225, n=715)	134 (59.6%)	265 (37.1%)
Highest Social Work Degree (n=227, n=734)		
No SW Degree	89 (39.2%)	323 (44.0%)
BSW	37 (16.3%)	235 (32.0%)
MSW	101 (44.5%)	176 (24.0%)
IV-E (n=224, n=714)	40 (17.9%)	111 (15.5%)
CP Tenure (n=227, n=734)		
< 1 yr	41 (18.1%)	110 (15.0%)
1-2 yrs	31 (13.7%)	108 (14.7%)
3-4 yrs	20 (8.8)	85 (11.6%)
5-6 yrs	11 (4.8%)	55 (7.5%)
7-8 yrs	5 (2.2%)	34 (4.6%)
9-10 yrs	10 (4.4%)	52 (7.1%)
11-12 yrs	10 (4.4%)	29 (4.0%)
13-15 yrs	27 (11.9%)	53 (7.2%)
> 15 yrs	72 (31.7%)	208 (28.3%)

Current Position Tenure (n=227, n=734)		
< 1 yr	67 (29.5%)	170 (23.2%)
1-2 yrs	44 (19.4%)	152 (20.7%)
3-4 yrs	27 (11.9%)	99 (13.5%)
5-6 yrs	9 (4.0%)	49 (6.7%)
7-8 yrs	8 (3.5%)	43 (5.9%)
9-10 yrs	15 (6.6%)	45 (6.1%)
11-12 yrs	6 (2.6%)	20 (2.7%)
13-15 yrs	22 (9.7%)	40 (5.4%)
> 15 yrs	29 (12.8%)	116 (15.8%)

Job Satisfaction

Less than half of Region 11 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota reported satisfaction with their current jobs (40%) as shown in Table 11.2.

Input into decision-making and professionals' beliefs that they have a positive impact on clients' lives are aspects that may contribute to job satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Table 11.2 shows that one out of every three Region 11 professionals reported (36%) that they did not have sufficient input into decision-making in the agencies in which they worked. However, Region 11 professionals overwhelmingly (93%) reported that they had a positive impact on the lives of their clients; this belief was consistent across every region in Minnesota.

Concern for personal and family safety as well as feeling overwhelmed by job duties may also contribute to job dissatisfaction. Concerns for personal and family safety were evident from Region 11 professionals' responses. Across Region 11, Table 11.2 shows that a vast majority of all professionals (95%) reported being afraid for their personal safety and over a quarter of all professionals (27%) reported being afraid for the safety of their own family at least some of the time. Safety concerns were highest - for both personal and one's own family safety - in the northern and western regions of Minnesota. In addition, a vast majority of all Region 11 professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by their job duties (61%).

Table 11.2
Region 11 and Statewide Job Satisfaction.

	Region 11 <i>(Sample size, n=58)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=734)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	138 (60.8%)	492 (66.7%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	100 (44.1%)	466 (63.5%)
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	215 (94.7%)	426 (58.0%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	61 (26.9%)	261 (35.6%)
I believe that I can have positive impact on the lives of my clients (For supervisors, please indicate if you believe that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the clients your staff serve)	210 (92.5%)	705 (96.0%)
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	138 (60.8%)	499 (68.0%)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is also often referred to as **compassion fatigue**, **vicarious trauma**, or **burn-out**. STS is defined as indirect exposure to traumatic material that results in symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, hopelessness, avoidance, minimizing, anger and cynicism, insensitivity to violence, sleeplessness, illness, inability to embrace complexity, and diminished self-care. STS is of particular concern for professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. In Region 11, the vast majority of professionals (83%) reported experiencing STS while carrying out their job duties, with one out of every three Region 11 professionals reporting that

these experiences had a negative effect on their ability to carry out their job, shown in Table 11.3. Of great concern for Region 11 is the reported lack of support available to assist professionals in managing their STS. Almost half of Region 11 professionals (45%) indicated they did not have the support they needed to manage their STS.

Table 11.3
Region 11 and Statewide Secondary Traumatic Stress.

	Region 11	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I have experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out my job duties (n=221; n=716)	184 (83.3%)	595 (83.1%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties (n=209; n=684)	84 (40.2%)	254 (37.1%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress (n=212; n=684)	117 (55.2%)	430 (62.9%)

Supervision

Supervision is a consistent predictor of workforce satisfaction and stability. It is encouraging that a majority of Region 11 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency (75%) reported satisfaction with the supervision they received. As shown in Table 11.4, professionals in Region 11 overwhelmingly reported that their supervisors trusted their decision-making and abilities (93%) and that their supervisors were willing to help when problems arose (87%). In addition, nearly three-quarters of Region 11 professionals reported that they and their supervisors shared work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services. However, half of all Region 11 professionals reported their supervision centered around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

Table 11.4
Region 11 and Statewide Supervision.

	Region 11 (Sample size, n=58)	Statewide (Sample size, n=734)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	170 (74.9%)	571 (77.8%)
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring (compliance) as opposed to support or education	115 (50.7%)	350 (47.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	211 (93.0%)	690 (94.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	198 (87.2%)	657 (89.5%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client service	166 (73.1%)	570 (77.7%)

Agency Processes, Policy, and Support

Professionals also responded to a number of questions about their perceptions of agency processes, policy, and attitudes of others. Table 11.5 shows that overwhelmingly, Region 11 professionals (95%) noted that their peers were willing to support and assist each other when problems arose. More than half of Region 11 professionals (59%) reported that their agencies provided sufficient professional development opportunities and activities. On the topic of policy, 34% of professionals agreed that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies in their agencies. However, an overwhelming majority of Region 11 professionals (64%) noted that frequent changes in policy have had a negative impact on their job performance, with over half of all professionals stating that they would be able to better carry out their job duties if explanations of policies were made clearer (56%). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of professionals (84%) did not believe that the public held their work in high esteem.

Table 11.5
Region 11 and Statewide Agency Processes, Policy, and Support.

	Region 11 (Sample size, n=58)	Statewide (Sample size, n=734)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	146 (64.3%)	430 (58.6%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	119 (58.6%)	453 (61.7%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem	37 (16.3%)	159 (21.7%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me, I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	127 (55.9%)	388 (52.9%)
In this agency, child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	78 (34.4%)	365 (49.7%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	215 (94.7%)	700 (95.4%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection and particularly in professionals' current agencies were a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. In this survey, we asked professionals to identify the job seeking activities in which they participated in the past year as well as their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies in the future.

In Table 11.6, the results of the survey revealed that in the past 12 months more than half of all Region 11 professionals (60%) had looked or applied for a position other than the one in which they currently worked. However, 21% of all Region 11 professionals actively sought positions solely outside of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency - referred to as **leavers** in the table below. In Region 11, 39% of professionals sought positions within the field or were inclusive of positions both inside and outside of the field in their job search - referred to as **movers** in the table below.

Table 11.6
Region 11 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Last Year.

	Region 11 <i>(Sample size, n=223)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	91 (40.8%)	338 (46.9%)
Movers	86 (38.6%)	233 (32.4%)
Leavers	46 (20.6%)	149 (20.7%)

In Table 11.7, the results of the survey revealed that the majority of Region 11 professionals (79%) intended to remain in their current positions in the upcoming 12 months. Within Region 11, only one out of every nine professionals intended to move to a position within child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency in a different agency than the one in which they were currently employed. Similarly, one out of every nine professionals in Region 11 intended to leave the field altogether.

Table 11.7
Region 11 and Statewide Workforce Stability, Next Year.

	Region 11 <i>(Sample size, n=217)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=700)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Stayers	172 (79.3%)	581 (83.0%)
Movers	22 (10.1%)	47 (6.7%)
Leavers	23 (10.6%)	72 (10.3%)

Table 11.8 shows the top three factors Region 11 professionals identified as important for retention are increased salary (90%), lower caseload (79%), and fewer administrative requirements (77%).

Table 11.8
Region 11 and Statewide Factors Important for Retention.

	Region 11 <i>(Sample size, n=223)</i>	Statewide <i>(Sample size, n=720)</i>
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Different work hours	85 (38.1%)	265 (36.8%)
Increased salary	200 (89.7%)	636 (88.3%)
Lower caseload	177 (79.4%)	586 (81.4%)
Fewer administrative requirements	171 (76.7%)	582 (80.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	73 (32.7%)	231 (32.1%)
Higher quality supervision	104 (46.6%)	300 (41.7%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	145 (65.0%)	443 (61.5%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	155 (69.5%)	446 (61.9%)
Additional supports to help deal with secondary traumatic stress	134 (60.1%)	470 (65.3%)
Additional professional development opportunities	151 (67.7%)	514 (71.4%)

Child Protection Reform

Region 11 professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption generally reported being aware of the child protection reforms taking place in Minnesota. In fact, 82% of professionals reported being generally aware of the reforms taking place in Minnesota and 70% of professionals were aware of **specific elements** of the reform **and** its resulting impact on their practice, shown in Table 11.9.

Generally, more Region 11 professionals reported being satisfied with communication provided by their agency than they were with communication provided by DHS. While 49% of Region 11 professionals reported satisfaction with communication by their agency regarding reform, only 28% were satisfied with communication by DHS regarding the proposed changes.

Region 11 professionals also reported that their agencies advocated on behalf of the workforce (54%) and on behalf of the children and families served during the current child protection reform process (57%).

Regardless of their awareness of the reform, their satisfaction about its communication, or their perceptions of advocacy efforts within their agencies, Region 11 professionals overwhelmingly (95%) indicated that there is a need to increase public awareness of their work.

Table 11.9
Region 11 and Statewide Child Protection Reform.

	Region 11	Statewide
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
I am generally aware of the child protection reforms taking place (n=222; n=717)	181 (81.5%)	605 (84.4%)
I am aware of specific elements of proposed child protection reforms in Minnesota AND how those will impact my practice (n=223; n=718)	157 (70.4%)	528 (73.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership at DHS about the proposed changes in child protection (n=222; n=716)	63 (28.4%)	247 (34.5%)
I am satisfied with the communication from the leadership in my agency about the proposed changes in child protection (n=223; n=718)	109 (48.9%)	473 (65.9%)
I feel as though my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce in the current child protection reform process (n=222; n=715)	120 (54.1%)	466 (65.2%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families served in the current child protection reform process (n=222; n=716)	127 (57.2%)	496 (69.3%)
There is a need to increase public awareness of the nature and value of my work (n=223; n=718)	210 (94.7%)	678 (94.4%)