Minnesota Child Welfare
Workforce Stabilization Study
2019

Child Welfare Workforce Stability
Following System Reform

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Acknowledgements

Contents

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. The Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization study, therefore, was developed to fill this gap while also considering the current context of child welfare practice and policy. In an effort to better understand the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of child welfare practitioners in Minnesota, researchers from the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) 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 first Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study in 2016. The information learned from the 2016 study was incredibly informative, thus the study was repeated (with slight modifications) in 2019.

This report provides statewide and regional descriptions of the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of Minnesota's child welfare workforce stemming from the 2019 survey. Key findings are highlighted within the body of the report, with additional detailed findings provided in the 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. 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 original Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study completed in 2016 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 Stabilization 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 the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators and representatives of the Children and Families Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services for review, modification, and adoption prior to implementation.

Based upon the rich information obtained in the original study, the study partners agreed that ongoing periodic assessment of the state of the workforce was warranted. The Department of Human Services generously funded the 2019 subsequent survey. The 2019 survey was modeled after the original study. Given feedback from the original study respondents, additional questions were added to this round of inquiry in order to solicit more detailed/nuanced information and to provide a more holistic understanding of workforce well-being.

The workforce survey consisted of 90 items which assessed the current composition and experience of Minnesota's child welfare workforce, workforce job satisfaction and well-being, workforce satisfaction with supervision, workforce intent to remain employed in child welfare, and workforce perception of child welfare systems change in Minnesota. An additional 13 items that assessed how the workforce accesses child welfare information were optional to each respondent and included at the very end of the survey. Professionals were also given the opportunity to offer additional feedback or clarify any survey responses deemed necessary 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 child welfare or child protection" and "If you would like to clarify any of your responses or give additional feedback or consideration, please share below."

From March 25-April 12, 2019, 2,511 child welfare and child protection social workers, case aides, and supervisors were invited to take the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey (WSS) administered by the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators. This survey asked questions regarding child welfare and child protection work tenure and experience, job satisfaction, workforce well-being, supervision adequacy, and perceptions of child welfare systems change. Respondent data is categorized by MACSSA region to protect the anonymity of participants. It is important to note that the Minnesota Prairie Council Alliance (MN PCA) includes counties from both Regions 9 and 10. In the data set (and for ongoing analysis), data from the MN PCA is coded as Region 10. The overall WSS response rate was 42.3% (1,063 respondents completing the survey). At the end of the WSS, participants were invited to provide information to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Safety and Permanency Division about how they access child welfare information as part of Minnesota's CFSR Program Improvement Plan. A total of 411 people participated in the DHS portion of the survey (response rate of those who were invited to participate in the WSS is 16.4%, response rate of those who began the survey is 38.7%, and response rate of those who provided near complete WSS data is 45.3%).

Figure 1. Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey Reponse Rates by Region
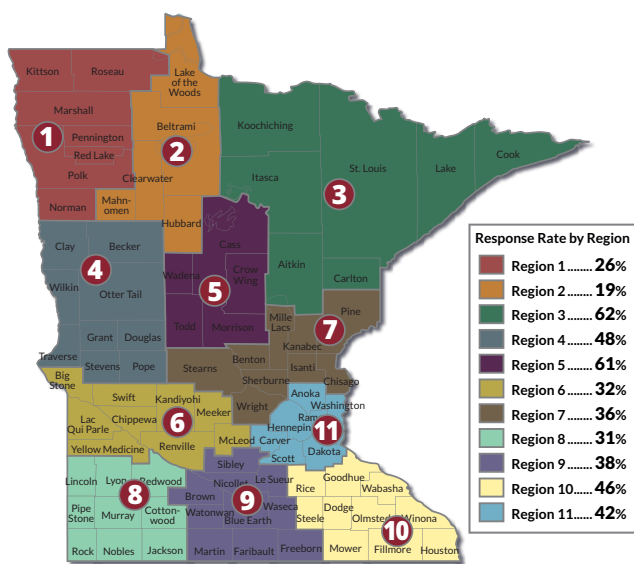
Descriptive and chi-square analysis of quantitative responses were conducted via SPSS 24; inductive thematic coding of qualitative responses was carried out via NVivo 12 (for additional details about the methodology employed in the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study, please see Appendix 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 professionals who make-up the workforce, the environment, as well as the broader policy and practice contexts in which they work. A summary of the key findings is presented below. A detailed description of quantitative and qualitative findings can be found in Appendices B1-B3, including responses given in the respondents' own words.

DEMOGRAPHY

Overall, Minnesota's child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency workforce largely identifies as White (89%) and female (86%), and is highly educated, with nearly half of professionals holding a graduate degree (44%). Approximately one third (29%) of professionals hold a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, and 15% of professionals specifically hold a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. About one out of every five (19%) professionals are Title IV-E Child Welfare alumni, but this varies considerably by region. Of important note, the child protection workforce continues to be unrepresentative of the population of Minnesota and, more importantly, of the children and families served within the child welfare system.

In terms of career stature and trajectory, one out of every five professionals is under the age of 30 years old, with half of the workforce being 31-45 years of age. A quarter of professionals have two years or less tenure in the field, while another quarter of the workforce has more than 15 years of tenure. One out of every five (21%) professionals is going to retire within the next 10 years, with nearly half of all retirements (42%) being planned to occur within the next five years. Thus, while the child protection workforce is comprised of a large portion of

professionals who are steeped in child welfare practice wisdom, the expertise of these individuals will continue to be lost as they begin to retire from the workforce.

JOB SATISFACTION

Overall Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in retention and the overall stability of the workforce. The majority (78%) of professionals reported they were satisfied with their job. While this is a marked improvement from the 2016 workforce study (up from 68%), this still means that one out of every five professionals is dissatisfied. Nearly all professionals reported having the knowledge (93%) and skills (98%) to do their job effectively, and 96% of professionals reported believing they have a positive impact on the lives of their clients. Workforce advocacy is an important element in supporting workplace satisfaction, and in this survey, three-quarters of professionals (73%) believed that their agencies advocated for the workforce.

While there is an overwhelmingly positive trend in job satisfaction among these professionals, there are areas in which they describe dissatisfaction and/or a desire for change. About two-thirds of the statewide workforce believed that they have sufficient input into decision making at their agency (69%) and that the professional development opportunities and activities provided are sufficient to enhance their ability to do their job (66%); while these numbers may look promising, this means that approximately one out of every three professionals report dissatisfaction in these areas. Slightly more than half of the workforce reported feeling overwhelmed in their job duties (58%). Other areas with sizable dissatisfaction included lack of cooperative participation in developing new programs (47%), frequent changes in policies resulting in a negative impact on job performance (49%), and lack of explanation of policy decisions (62%). Outside of workplace parameters, only 27% of the workforce believes that the general public holds child welfare employees in high professional esteem.

Work Setting Satisfaction

Child welfare professionals have shared anecdotal information around the variability in their work locations and their satisfaction (or lack thereof) within these settings. Findings from this survey reveal that

approximately half (47%) of professionals reported working primarily from a county-based office with some flexibility to work off-site. However, this differed significantly by region with some regions reporting little flexibility in work location (i.e., working solely from county-based offices). In other regions (such as the Twin Cities metro region), a significant number of professionals (33%) reported working primarily in a remote location. Note: these workplace differences were captured prior to the onset of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, which brought about even greater change. Professionals offered a myriad of suggestions to improve the location in which they primarily conducted their work. Surprisingly, given the great variability in work locations utilized by child welfare professionals across the state, a majority of professionals (83%) reported being satisfied with their primary work location. Professionals offered a variety of suggestions to improve their primary work setting. Some suggestions were relevant to county-based settings, such as need for better office facilities, creating more privacy within office settings, improvements to parking and transportation, and increased safety/health environment strategies. Others specifically requested more flexible work locations to accommodate requisite after-hours work, having to cover expansive geography of large counties, and to support increased work/life balance. Illustrative quotes of these recommendations can be found in Appendix B1. In alignment with suggestions around work setting, professionals also requested a number of technology-based enhancements to improve their work including cell phones and laptops with remote capabilities and software to support real-time work in the field.

WORKFORCE WELL-BEING

Safety and Secondary Traumatic Stress

A stable workforce requires a safe workforce. This is an important area for intervention. More than half (64%) of the workforce reported sometimes being afraid for their personal safety, and more than a third of all professionals (41%) reported sometimes being afraid for the safety of their own family. From 2016-2019, the proportion of professionals reporting these fears increased (from 58% to 64%, and 36% to 41%, respectively).

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is a very important consideration. For purposes of this study STS, also

known as compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, or burnout was 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/or diminished self-care. In the Minnesota child welfare workforce, this experience is extremely common where 88% reported experiencing STS. Thirty percent reported that they did not have the support needed to manage this stress and 39% said STS negatively affects their ability to do their job. Similar to the 2016 study, this remains a critical area for intervention.

Representing and Supporting Professionals From Diverse Communities

Disproportionality and disparities have been a core concern in Minnesota's child protection system, especially as they pertain to BIPOC communities. Research and practice wisdom has suggested that one way to address these levels of disparity and disproportionality is to recruit and retain professionals from diverse communities into Minnesota's child protection workforce. Data from the workforce survey indicate that many professionals support these efforts and desire a more diverse child welfare workforce. There was, however, a varied opinion on how to accomplish this. That said, some respondents focused on the challenges associated with diversifying the workforce rather than identifying strategies to adapt. Responses across all of these perspectives are included in more detail in Appendix B1.

Diversity Climate in the Workplace

Anticipating that responses to diversifying the workforce might be varied, researchers asked respondents to also share their perspectives related to the diversity climate within their workplace. In sharing their perspective, professionals also shared their personal experiences, providing illustrative examples of supportive, unsupportive, and/or damaging hurtful climates. For example, one professional noted:

> *"The population of our county is continuing to become more diverse, and our professional workforce needs to reflect that. Some of our clients, rightfully so, have expressed that we as White social workers do not understand their culture. Within our agency we do a great job of consulting with one another, but this consultation would be so much more valuable if we had more diverse experiences and backgrounds."*

Some professionals reported satisfaction (15%) with either the diversity of the workforce in their agency or the climate in which they worked. However one out of every 10 professionals reported that there were diversity climate issues at their agency—individuals treated unfairly based on their race or other cultural dimensions. For example, one worker reported, "... I have heard casually racist/xenophobic/transphobic comments in the office, like workers who don't want to provide services for human beings they consider 'illegal' ...." Most professionals who noted diversity climate issues requested additional diversity training within their agency. For example, one professional suggested, "I think as a whole, our agency could strongly benefit from thoughtful diversity training... and not just talking about barriers that some people face, but how those barriers came to be so that we can work together to tear them down. We can't change what we won't acknowledge."

Effects of Child Welfare Work on Personal Health and Well-Being

In this study we asked about professionals' personal health and well-being. The majority of professionals (76%) reported that they are able to create balance between their jobs and their personal/family lives. However, a significant number of professionals reported that their job negatively impacts their well-being. Specifically, some workers reported that their job negatively impacts their ability to focus, be "present", prioritize, organize, and attend to detail (38%), and that their job negatively impacts their mental (53%) and physical (43%) health. The issues of how professionals' work affects their physical and mental well-being were widespread and consistent across the state. While 90% of professionals reported using self-care activities to cope with the stressors of their job, over one-third (36%) reported using unhealthy coping behaviors. Positive coping and self-care strategies included exercise, participating in enjoyable activities (e.g. hobbies, dancing, cooking etc.), spending time with family and friends, maintaining boundaries (e.g., not taking calls at home after hours), physical health-promoting behaviors (healthy eating, getting sleep, going out in nature), faith-based activities, taking time off from work, staying connected to others (peers, supervisors, etc.), and utilizing professional therapeutic support. Unhealthy coping behaviors reported by professionals included using alcohol or cigarettes, binge-watching television, and

isolating from family and friends. Some professionals reported simply being too tired to engage in any self-care strategies.

Supervision

Statewide, a vast majority of professionals reported that their supervisors trust their decision-making and ability to do their job (92%), are willing to help when problems arise (91%), care about them as a person (91%), and recognize the strengths they bring to the agency (91%). In addition, more than three-quarters (81%) of professionals reported that they and their supervisors share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services, and 81% also agree that they can talk about difficult things with their supervisor. Thus, it is not surprising that nearly 80% of professionals reported that they receive adequate supervision from their immediate supervisor. However, nearly half of all professionals (46%) reported their supervision centers around administrative aspects, such as monitoring and compliance.

WORKFORCE STABILITY

Career Plans (Retirement)

Numerous factors contribute to the stability of a workforce. Natural attrition through retirement is not only to be expected, but also can be leveraged in ways that improve service provision to children and families. For example, while retirements may result in a loss of professional expertise and experience, they may also provide opportunities to further diversify the workforce, invite new professionals with lived experience, and recruit individuals with more recent connections to educational institutions and resources (e.g., access to cutting-edge research, evidence-based practice knowledge, etc.). In this study, as noted above, 21% of professionals reported that they had plans to retire within the next ten years, and nearly half (42%) of those with retirement plans reported intent to retire within five years.

Job Seeking

In 2016, 53% of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, permanency, and adoption reported that they had taken steps to seek employment elsewhere (either outside of their agency or outside of the field altogether) within the last 12 months. Given prevalent job dissatisfaction,

experiences of secondary trauma stress, and safety concerns, this was not surprising. Job seeking activities in 2019 have slightly decreased from what was seen in 2016, with fewer than half (46%) of professionals reporting job seeking activities in the past 12 months. A quarter of child welfare professionals were seeking to stay in the child welfare field but were looking to move to a new agency; however, one out of every five professionals was looking to leave the field altogether.

The vast majority (78%) of professionals intended to remain in their current position for the next 12 months. However, a significant proportion (12%) of professionals were classified as contemplators - a new category that emerged from the current study that included those who reported both wanting to stay and also being interested in looking for other positions. Across the state, a majority (92%) of professionals agreed that increased salary would boost the likelihood of them staying in their current positions for the next 12 months. Furthermore, having fewer administrative requirements (80%), additional professional development opportunities (74%), a lower caseload (74%), and better benefits (73%), were all important potential incentives for improving workforce stability.

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM CHANGE

The child welfare system in Minnesota, like other jurisdictions across the United States, routinely undergoes shifts in practice as a result of changes to policy and in response to new and evolving knowledge of evidence-based practices. Communication about new practices and policies is key with respect to implementing system changes and at the direct service level. Generally, professionals reported being more satisfied with the communication provided by their agency (63%) than communication provided by DHS (39%). Furthermore, though a majority (60%) of professionals believed they received the direction and support needed to successfully implement new practices and policies, a majority also felt that there is not enough time in their day-to-day work to implement those policies (71%). Professionals also provided feedback about practice and policy changes in Minnesota, which further described the challenges inherent in an ever-changing practice landscape. Responses highlighted the dissatisfaction felt by the workforce in this regard, and focused on the perceived lack of resources necessary to implement practice changes as well as feelings of being excluded from

policy and practice discussions occurring at the state level. For example, quotes provided by professionals included:

> *"There are NOT enough resources or time to implement the added duties required by the Task Force. I believe people at the top feel better knowing they are asking counties to do more and that they really believe that children are now safer, unfortunately because we do not have adequate time or staff in some cases kids are actually at greater risk today than they were before the Task Force mandates. Mandates need to come with adequate funding to implement….the county is doing the best it can with the limited resources it has."*

And:

> *"I would love to see more opportunities for social workers to be active participants in developing new policies and procedures at the state level. We have a lot of experience and ideas about how to improve our practice in ways that benefit our families, but it feels like lawmakers and even DHS don't consider us experts in our own field."*

Conclusions and Recommendations

The original Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study was completed in 2016 as a response to large-scale child protection reform. Researchers at the University of Minnesota were able to gauge initial reactions by child welfare professionals, assess workforce perceptions of their work and their experiences, and understand the stability of Minnesota's child welfare workforce in the initial survey. While not every survey question focused on this reform, the overall experiences and perceptions of the workforce were likely influenced by these events.

As we know, child protection practice and policy in Minnesota evolves and changes as new research findings are revealed, the composition of our communities change, and as new issues arise (e.g., increased addiction to opioids, mental health needs, etc.). Thus, in 2019, researchers at the University of Minnesota conducted a subsequent Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Study with the intention of learning about the experiences and opinions of professionals after implementation of the aforementioned large-scale reform efforts. Findings of the study reveal that many professionals are struggling to deal with stress stemming from the challenges and complexities of child welfare work. Furthermore, the lack of diversity in the workforce and [sometimes] hostile climates within agencies are important issues that need to be addressed. The field cannot hesitate or turn away from this harsh reality, but should seek to lift and support the ideas, opportunities, and input from the frontline workforce that may improve these feelings of discontent. Stabilizing the workforce by recruiting and supporting child welfare professionals with a variety of backgrounds and experiences create opportunities to retain professionals with skills, expertise, and historical knowledge needed within the field. Ultimately, this will lead to better experiences and outcomes for children and families.

The authors of this report urge readers to view the key findings and recommendations presented herein within the context of a county-operated, state-supervised system, and reflecting a period of time directly following large-scale system reform efforts. While many findings may be easily attributed to discontent arising from such reform efforts, findings other than those directly connected to change efforts also emerged (with many findings showing consistency with those of the 2016 study). Recommendations stemming from all findings should be seriously considered, regardless of whether they are directly tied to a perceived point-in-time (e.g., system reform reflections on the Task Force and large-scale reform) or not (e.g., retirements, workforce well-being, etc.).

1. Similar to the recommendations of the 2016 survey, current recommendations emphasize the critical need to develop and scaffold training for new professionals entering the field, as well as those with longer job tenure. Minnesota's child welfare workforce is largely composed of professionals that are new to the field; in fact, a quarter of respondents to the current survey reported working in the field for two years or less. In addition, professionals entering the field come from a variety of educational backgrounds; some come from social work backgrounds, some enter with child welfare specific training and education (via Title IV-E training programs), some come from other educational programs, and some enter with graduate degrees. Researchers also learned that a significant proportion of the workforce intends to leave their current jobs (or the field altogether) through job seeking activities or retirement (with one in 10 professionals

intending to retire in the next five years), thus creating vacancies for new professionals to enter the workforce. This culminates in a tremendously new and potentially inexperienced workforce in need of thoughtfully designed and delivered training. Professionals responding to the survey (including new professionals and those who are more seasoned) requested additional professional development opportunities, indicating that it was a factor important for retention. The need for professional development opportunities is not unique to the frontline workforce, however. Based upon respondents' indication that most supervision focuses on administrative aspects of their work (i.e., monitoring and compliance), the authors of this study recommend developing an additional supervisor training series to ensure a balanced and comprehensive supervision experience, which research clearly demonstrates is tied to workforce stability and lower rates of staff turnover.

2. The current child welfare workforce in Minnesota is not racially representative of either the state's general population nor of the population of children and families served by the child welfare system. Practice wisdom combined with broad scale research tell us that this is an ineffective way of working within diverse communities and that this needs immediate attention. Recommendations from this survey to increase workforce diversity are two-fold. First, the state, counties, and tribes must design and implement effective recruitment strategies based upon a recognition of the vast array of communities served in the child welfare system and the critical importance of representation of these communities within the workforce. In addition to changes needed by the broader service sector, universities and colleges that offer specialized child welfare training and education programs (e.g., Title IV-E Fellowships) must also attend to these critical issues, as these programs are direct feeders into the child welfare workforce. We know child welfare professionals with specialized child welfare training and education are more stable in the workforce, so recruiting into educational programs with these programs is key not only to workforce diversification, but also to workforce stability. Yet, attention to recruitment is not enough. Locally-based hiring practices must be reviewed in order

to ensure culturally-responsive and effective hiring practices are being implemented. Supportive work environments are also critical to retaining a diverse workforce, including recognizing and providing tailored supports based upon unique challenges professionals of color face in providing services that have historically been viewed by communities of color as oppressive and harmful. Those who are responsible for creating child welfare work environments must focus on concrete strategies that can be implemented to establish (and improve) culturally respectful and supportive workplace settings, climate, and policies within county office settings and to create opportunities to engage and promote diverse groups of professionals into leadership roles.

3. Results of this study began to shed light into the variety of ways in which the workforce operates within its physical environment—ranging from working primarily within county office settings to working primarily in remote work settings. While most professionals reported satisfaction with their office arrangement, requests for increased flexibility and tools to operate effectively within hybrid environments were reported as being needed. Given the shift that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to professionals' work environments, these resources may be needed more now than ever. It will be critical to re-assess the ways in which the workforce has shifted with respect to both in-office and remote work settings to ensure that professionals have what they need to be successful. These resources not only include tools (e.g., laptops, software, etc.), but also spaces where professionals feel a sense of belonging, and where they can find peer and supervisor consultation and camaraderie. In addition, the field of child welfare needs to assess how the current work arrangements present both benefits and challenges, including a better understanding of how these arrangements impact services and outcomes for children and families.

4. Well-being is likely the most significant issue that arose from the current survey with 58% of all professionals reporting being overwhelmed by their job duties. Perhaps more importantly, a significant proportion of the workforce (approximately half) reported that their job negatively impacts their cognitive, physical, and mental health. This

finding was not unique to one particular region or location within the state, but was actually quite consistent across every region in the state. Thus, the authors of this report strongly encourage counties to develop and implement, with input by the workforce, a well-being plan which recognizes professionals' experiences of secondary traumatic stress, concerns regarding personal safety, and the stresses inherent in child welfare work. Plans must support professionals in maintaining healthy professional work environments while encouraging and supporting self-care practices. In order to stabilize their workforce and reduce the high costs associated with turnover (costs both to the counties and those receiving services), counties must invest in structural changes that accommodate and promote high levels of well-being across their staff. Structural changes must specifically include providing time necessary to participate in activities that promote well-being in order for plans to be effective.

5. Consistent with what was evident in 2016, professionals continue to be dissatisfied with, and request opportunities to be involved in, program, practice, and policy development and/or refinement at the state and local levels. Furthermore, the workforce believes that frequent changes in policies negatively impact their work, and they desire involvement with respect to the content being discussed, the timing of proposed changes, and the ways in which these changes are communicated. Involvement in program, practice, and policy development and/or refinement allows for innovative solutions that are in line with workforce demands of time, resources, and other policy and program requirements. This involvement also increases satisfaction with child welfare work and supports practice-informed implementation of policy and practice changes in the field. This may be particularly true of those professionals in the workforce who have a mid-level of experience in

the field (i.e., between three and eight years)—those who are adept at understanding the nuance of practice and policy decisions, but who may not be asked to participate in this kind of decision-making in favor of inviting those with more experience or those in supervisory positions.

6. Finally, the workforce reiterated their perception that the general public does not view child welfare (and child protection) work in high regard. The authors of this report suggest child welfare agency leadership take action to ensure that the general public has a more nuanced and deeper understanding of the complex role of child welfare, and particularly child protection, work. Specific recommendations include conducting research to better understand what the public does in fact know and think about child maltreatment and Minnesota's response to allegations of maltreatment. Based upon findings from research with the general public, public service announcements, social media initiatives, and general outreach and engagement can be tailored accordingly. The authors do not make this recommendation lightly and recognize that it will take a concerted, cross-jurisdictional effort. Yet, based upon the preposition of concerned respondents in the current survey this truly must be prioritized if the workforce is to be supported in their efforts. Community engagement in the work of child welfare, and specifically in child protection, is critical to ensuring that systems responding to alleged child maltreatment are appropriately resourced by county boards (via community support), that timely and accurate information about alleged maltreatment is reported by the community, and that individual community members become engaged regardless of their formal connection to the child protection system (e.g., as foster parents, Guardian ad Litems, advocates, volunteers, etc.). The bottom line is that public perception matters in the broader work of child welfare.

Appendix A
Methods

Participants

In March 2019, all child welfare and child protection social workers, case aides, and supervisors employed within Minnesota's public child welfare system were invited to participate in the 2019 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey (WSS). The survey was administered by the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA). Professionals were invited to participate via an online survey delivered through an email sent by each county's director, who 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 2,511 frontline and supervisory professionals working in child welfare. A total of 1,063 child welfare professionals from 72 (of 87) counties responded to the survey, a 42.3% statewide response rate (a response rate nearly identical to the 2016 survey response rate; Figure 1). Eighty percent of the responses (n=847) were from professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency (the focus of this report); the remaining 216 responses were from child

welfare professionals working explicitly outside of these areas (e.g., children's mental health, prevention and early intervention services, and other related children's services).

It is important to note that not all professionals who responded to the survey answered every survey question. However, 85% of those responding to the survey submitted near complete data (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey Completion by Survey Section
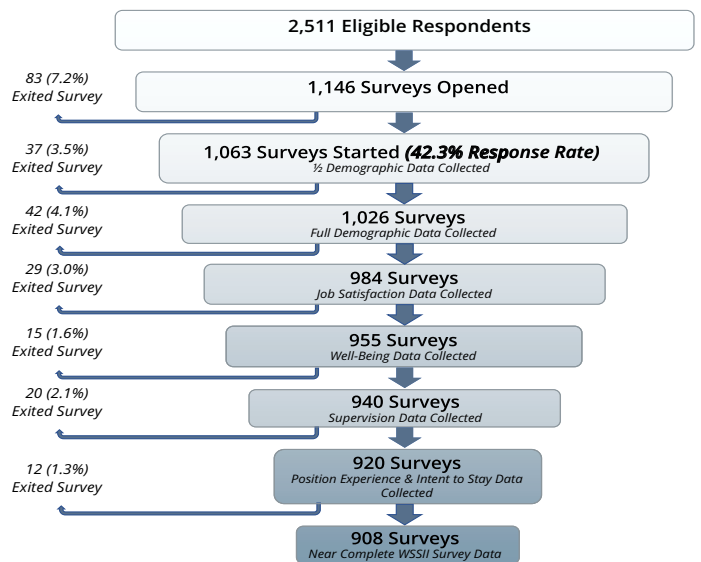
Figure 1. Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey Reponse Rates by Region

Response Rate by Region	
Region 1	26%
Region 2	19%
Region 3	62%
Region 4	48%
Region 5	61%
Region 6	32%
Region 7	36%
Region 8	31%
Region 9	38%
Region 10	46%
Region 11	42%
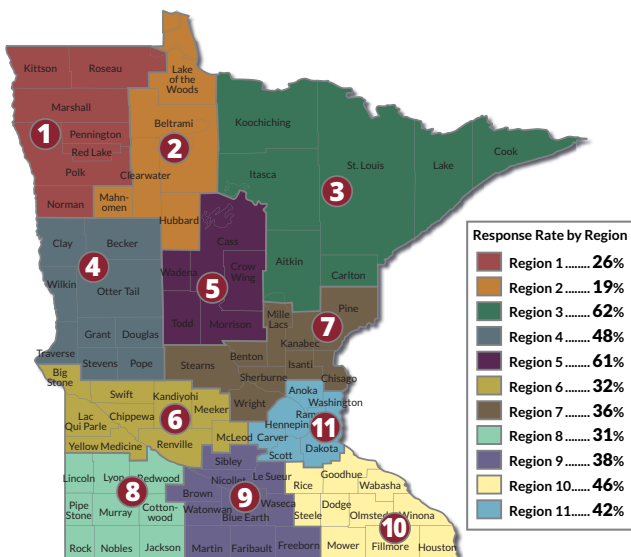
Instrumentation

The 2019 Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey was administered approximately three years after the original survey. The 2019 survey was designed to inform state and county agencies of the current state of the workforce and inform strategy development aimed at stabilizing the child welfare workforce and increasing employee retention, and thus largely mirrored the original survey (Piescher et al., 2018). The survey included questions regarding child welfare and child protection work tenure and experience, job satisfaction, workforce well-being (new to the 2019 survey), supervision adequacy, and perceptions of child welfare systems change. At the end of the survey, participants were also invited to provide information to the Minnesota Department of

Human Services (DHS) Child Safety and Permanency Division about how they access child welfare information as part of Minnesota's Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Because these latter questions were added to the survey as part of the PIP, the results of these questions have been analyzed by the DHS Child Safety and Permanency Division and are not presented in the current report.

The survey was presented to members of the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and staff from the DHS Child Safety and Permanency Division for review, modification, and adoption prior to implementation. The workforce survey consisted of 49 items, including: eight demographic items, seven items on current agency role, five job satisfaction items, six well-being items, one item on supervision, 17 items on experience and intent to remain employed, two items on child welfare systems change, and one open-ended item for respondents to offer additional feedback. Many of the items in the survey were multi-part items, and therefore offered participants opportunities to respond to several aspects (e.g., satisfaction with various elements of child welfare work) in one item.

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 (see 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.

This report focuses on the responses of professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota (n=847). 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, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency, the small sample size of this group 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.

Analysis of responses to qualitative questions followed an inductive coding process; researchers used NVivo12 to code these responses and to create emergent themes and sub-themes. Qualitative analysis included responses of all survey participants with the exception of responses such as "N/A." Themes and sub-themes were used to formulate key findings included in the current report (see Appendix B1).

Appendix B1
Regional and Statewide Findings

Workforce Demography

The county-administered, state-supervised structure of Minnesota's child welfare system creates challenges to understanding workforce demography. Thus, a critical area of focus for the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Stabilization Survey was workforce demography. A summary of key findings is presented in narrative; additional details can be found in Table 1 on page 12.

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 (88%). These professionals overwhelmingly identified as White (89%; Table 1). Of professionals who responded to the survey statewide, 7% identified as Black/African American, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% Native American/American Indian (representing seven of Minnesota's 11 federally recognized tribes), 3% Hispanic/Latino/Latina, and 2% Hmong (to ensure confidentiality of respondents, these data are not reported by region). The workforce included professionals of color in seven of the 11 regions, with the proportion of professionals of color being highest in regions with significantly-sized metropolitan areas (e.g., Regions 3 and 11). Similarly, professionals largely identified as female (86%), with the proportion of females in each region ranging from 78-100%. The age distribution of the workforce was much more normalized across the state. Twenty-one percent of professionals responding to this survey reported being 30 years or younger, 49% were 31-45 years old, 22% were 46-55 years old, and 8% reported being 56 years or older. However, approximately 40% of the workforce in Regions 5, 7, and 8 reported being 30 years of age or younger, and about 10% of the workforce in Regions 3, 6, and 11 reported being 56 years of age or older.

Educational Background

The educational preparation of professionals working in public child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota in 2019 was quite diverse. While nearly half (44%; Table 1) of all professionals responding to the survey reported backgrounds in social work, the majority of professionals had educational backgrounds representing a range of other disciplines (e.g., social sciences, arts and humanities, sciences, education, etc.). Statewide, 44% of professionals held a graduate degree, the largest proportions of which were employed in regions with significantly-sized metropolitan regions and those with institutions of higher education (e.g., Regions 3 and 11). Additionally, one out of every five professionals reported receiving specialized education and training in child welfare through Title IV-E programs, ranging from 7% to 25% across regions.

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

Though professionals in public child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency in Minnesota in 2019 with more than nine years of experience made up the largest group statewide, it only included approximately 40% of total responses (Table 1). Newer workers, including those with 1-2 and 3-4 years of experience, also made up a significant portion of professionals statewide (18% and 20%, respectively). Though many regions similarly had a majority of their workforce with a tenure of nine or more years, some regions had a less experienced workforce. Regions 2, 5, and 8 had a majority of their workforce holding 3-4 years of tenure and the central and northeast regions of the state (Regions 3 and 7) had a majority of their workforce holding 1-2 years tenure.

Time in Current Position

Across the state, professionals were relatively new to their current positions as well. Professionals with 3-4 years in their current position made up the largest group, approximately a quarter (26%; Table 1) of the workforce. More than half of professionals statewide (65%) had worked four years or fewer in their current positions. Similar patterns of professionals' time in their current positions were found in regions across the state.

Table 1.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Demography

Region	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Race												
White	744 (88.7%)	12 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	116 (95.1%)	53 (96.4%)	26 (96.3%)	30 (100.0%)	79 (97.5%)	21 (95.5%)	34 (100.0%)	99 (96.1%)	268 (77.2%)
Professionals of Color	95 (11.3)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.9%)	2 (3.6%)	1 3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (4.6%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.9%)	79 (22.8%)
Position												
Supervisor	106 (22.5%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	15 (12.2%)	7 (12.5%)	4 (14.8%)	4 (13.3%)	10 (12.3%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (20.6%)	12 (11.4%)	42 (12.0%)
Frontline	741 (87.5%)	10 (83.3%)	5 (83.3%)	108 (87.8%)	49 (87.5%)	23 (85.2%)	26 (86.7%)	71 (87.7%)	20 (90.9%)	27 (79.4%)	93 (88.6%)	309 (88.0%)
Gender												
Male	115 (13.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	24 (19.5%)	4 (7.1%)	6 (22.2%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (6.2%)	3 (13.6%)	2 (5.9%)	15 (14.3%)	53 (15.1%)
Female	729 (86.1%)	12 (100.0%)	5 (83.3%)	99 (80.5%)	52 (92.9%)	21 (77.8%)	28 (93.3%)	75 (92.6%)	19 (86.4%)	32 (94.1%)	90 (85.7%)	296 (84.3%)
Other	3 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.6%)
Age												
20-25	55 (6.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (5.7%)	7 (12.7%)	6 (22.2%)	3 (10.0%)	10 (12.3%)	1 (4.5%)	4 (11.8%)	10 (9.5%)	7 (2.0%)
26-30	119 (14.2%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (20.0%)	13 (10.6%)	8 (14.5%)	5 (18.5%)	5 (16.7%)	20 (24.7%)	7 (31.8%)	4 (11.8%)	7 (6.7%)	47 (13.7%)
31-35	157 (18.7%)	2 (16.7%)	2 (40.0%)	25 (20.3%)	10 (18.2%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (10.0%)	13 (16.0%)	3 (13.6%)	7 (20.6%)	26 (24.8%)	64 (18.6%)
36-40	142 (16.9%)	3 (25.0%)	1 (20.0%)	22 (17.9%)	10 (18.2%)	6 (22.2%)	7 (23.3%)	11 (13.6%)	5 (22.7%)	2 (5.9%)	20 (19.0%)	55 (16.0%)
41-45	109 (13.0%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (13.0%)	11 (20.0%)	2 (7.4%)	2 (6.7%)	10 (12.3%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (11.8%)	14 (13.3%)	46 (13.4%)
46-50	106 (12.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	18 (14.6%)	8 (14.5%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (10.0%)	7 (8.6%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (20.6%)	10 (9.5%)	48 (14.0%)
51-55	77 (9.2%)	3 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (8.1%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (6.2%)	1 (4.5%)	4 (11.8%)	14 (13.3%)	34 (9.9%)
56-60	40 (4.8%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (10.0%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.9%)	3 (2.9%)	23 (6.7%)
Over 60	33 (3.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.0%)	20 (5.8%)
Graduate Degree												
Yes	369 (43.6%)	3 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	60 (48.8%)	6 (10.9%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (10.0%)	21 (25.9%)	4 (18.2%)	7 (20.6%)	32 (30.5%)	232 (67.4%)
Highest Social Work Degree												
No SW Degree	476 (56.2%)	6 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)	78 (63.4%)	24 (42.9%)	12 (44.4%)	13 (43.3%)	42 (51.9%)	9 (40.9%)	26 (76.5%)	45 (42.9%)	218 (62.1%)
BSW	242 (28.6%)	6 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)	21 (17.1%)	30 (53.6%)	15 (55.6%)	14 (46.7%)	32 (23.1%)	12 (54.5%)	8 (23.5%)	46 (43.8%)	55 (15.7%)
MSW	129 (15.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	24 (19.5%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (10.0%)	7 (12.3%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (13.3%)	78 (22.2%)

Received IV-E Funding												
Either BSW or MSW	160 (18.9%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (16.7%)	29 (23.5%)	8 (14.3%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (10.0%)	9 (11.1%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (5.8%)	14 (13.3%)	85 (24.2%)
BSW IV-E only	46 (5.4%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (1.6%)	6 (10.7%)	4 (14.8%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (6.2%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (2.9%)	6 (5.7%)	14 (4.0%)
MSW IV-E only	108 (12.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (21.1%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)	4 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	8 (7.6%)	66 (18.8%)
BSW & MSW IV-E	6 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (1.4%)
CP Tenure												
< 1 yr	63 (7.5%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (8.3%)	6 (10.9%)	5 (18.5%)	1 (3.3%)	8 (10.0%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (3.0%)	9 (8.7%)	18 (5.2%)
1-2 yrs	149 (17.8%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (20.0%)	35 (28.9%)	8 (14.5%)	6 (22.2%)	7 (23.3%)	20 (25.0%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (21.2%)	14 (13.5%)	47 (13.5%)
3-4 yrs	163 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	18 (14.9%)	13 (23.6%)	7 (25.9%)	6 (20.0%)	12 (15.0%)	5 (22.7%)	2 (6.1%)	22 (21.2%)	76 (21.9%)
5-6 yrs	84 (10.0%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (20.0%)	15 (12.4%)	7 (12.7%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (6.7%)	7 (8.6%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (12.1%)	12 (11.5%)	30 (8.6%)
7-8 yrs	48 (5.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.6%)	2 (3.6%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.3%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (4.5%)	6 (18.2%)	4 (3.8%)	23 (6.6%)
9-10 yrs	38 (4.5%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.5%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (10.0%)	7 (8.6%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (3.0%)	8 (7.7%)	13 (3.7%)
11-12 yrs	30 (3.6%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.1%)	3 (5.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.1%)	4 (3.8%)	9 (2.6%)
13-15 yrs	57 (6.8%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (20.0%)	7 (5.8%)	1 (0.1%)	2 (7.4%)	1 (3.3%)	2 (2.5%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (3.0%)	8 (7.7%)	29 (8.4%)
> 15 yrs	204 (24.4%)	4 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (16.5%)	14 (25.5%)	3 (11.1%)	9 (30.0%)	17 (21.3%)	4 (18.2%)	8 (24.2%)	23 (22.1%)	102 (29.4%)
Tenure in Current Position												
< 1 yr	112 (13.2%)	3 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (12.2%)	8 (14.3%)	6 (22.2%)	4 (13.3%)	14 (17.3%)	4 (18.2%)	5 (14.7%)	12 (11.4%)	41 (11.7%)
1-2 yrs	219 (25.9%)	2 (16.7%)	2 (40.0%)	55 (44.7%)	12 (14.3%)	6 (22.2%)	6 (20.0%)	24 (29.6%)	1 (4.6%)	7 (20.6%)	19 (18.1%)	85 (24.2%)
3-4 yrs	220 (26%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	26 (21.1%)	19 (33.9%)	7 (25.9%)	6 (20.0%)	13 (16.1%)	8 (36.4%)	5 (14.7%)	33 (31.4%)	100 (28.5%)
5-6 yrs	79 (9.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (9.8%)	6 (10.7%)	2 (7.4%)	2 (6.7%)	7 (8.6%)	1 (4.6%)	4 (11.8%)	12 (11.4%)	33 (9.4%)
7-8 yrs	36 (4.3%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (13.3%)	5 (6.2%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (11.8%)	5 (4.8%)	11 (3.1%)
9-10 yrs	26 (3.1%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (1.2%)	3 (13.6%)	3 (8.8%)	4 (3.8%)	9 (2.6%)
11-12 yrs	24 (2.8%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.4%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)	4 (4.9%)	1 (4.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.9%)	9 (2.6%)
13-15 yrs	28 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (4.8%)	16 (4.6%)
> 15 yrs	102 (12.1%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.5%)	7 (12.5%)	4 (14.8%)	5 (16.7%)	10 (12.4%)	2 (9.1%)	5 (14.7%)	12 (11.4%)	47 (13.4%)

Job Satisfaction

The majority of professionals statewide reported that they were satisfied with their job (78%; Table 2). While most regions showed similar patterns to statewide findings, over one third of professionals from Region 3 (35%) reported job dissatisfaction. Additionally, nearly all professionals reported having the knowledge (93%) and skills (98%) to do their job effectively, as well as peers who will support and assist them when problems arise (95%). The majority of professionals who responded to the survey also reported that they believed their agency advocated for the children and families with whom professionals work (83%) and for the child welfare workforce (73%). Importantly, almost all (96%) professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency reported believing they have a positive impact on the lives of their clients.

The survey also revealed areas of job dissatisfaction. About two-thirds of the statewide workforce believed that they have sufficient input into decision making at their agency (69%) and that the professional development opportunities and activities provided are sufficient to enhance their ability to do their job (66%); while these numbers may look promising, this means that approximately one out of every three professionals report dissatisfaction in these areas. (However, more than 90% of professionals from the most north and south-west regions [Regions 1, 2, and 8] reported believing they have sufficient input into decision making at their agency.) Only about half (53%) of all professionals reported that the child welfare staff at their agencies cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs. Similarly, approximately half of the workforce reported feeling overwhelmed in their job duties (58%) and that frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on their job performance (49%). Two-thirds (62%) of the workforce agreed that they would be able to better carry out their job duties and responsibilities if explanations of policy decisions were clarified. Lastly, only about a quarter (27%) of the workforce believes that the general public holds child welfare employees in high professional esteem.

Table 2.
Job Satisfaction of the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I am satisfied with my job as it currently is	659 (78.2%)	11 (91.7%)	6 (100.0%)	79 (64.8%)	49 (87.5%)	21 (77.8%)	27 (90.0%)	62 (76.5%)	19 (86.4%)	31 (91.2%)	88 (83.8%)	266 (76.4%)
I have the knowledge that I need to do my job effectively	782 (92.5%)	12 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	103 (84.4%)	53 (94.6%)	26 (96.3%)	27 (90.0%)	72 (88.9%)	20 (90.9%)	34 (100.0%)	98 (93.3%)	331 (94.6%)
I have the skills that I need to do my job effectively	830 (98.1%)	12 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	117 (95.9%)	56 (100.0%)	27 (100.0%)	29 (96.7%)	80 (98.8%)	20 (90.9%)	34 (100.0%)	103 (98.1%)	346 (98.6%)
I believe I have sufficient input into decision making in the agency in which I work	577 (68.5%)	11 (91.7%)	6 (100.0%)	78 (63.9%)	49 (87.5%)	23 (85.2%)	25 (83.3%)	53 (65.4%)	21 (95.5%)	27 (79.4%)	82 (78.1%)	202 (58.2%)
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)	806 (95.5%)	12 (100.0%)	5 (83.3%)	113 (92.6%)	56 (100.0%)	27 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)	78 (97.5%)	21 (95.5%)	33 (97.1%)	104 (99.0%)	327 (93.4%)

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I feel overwhelmed in my job duties	492 (58.2%)	6 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)	91 (74.6%)	35 (62.5%)	17 (63.0%)	18 (60.0%)	51 (63.0%)	17 (77.3%)	20 (58.8%)	60 (57.1%)	174 (49.7%)
Frequent changes in policies have had a negative impact on my job performance	411 (48.9%)	5 (41.7%)	2 (33.3%)	72 (59.5%)	22 (39.3%)	13 (50.0%)	14 (48.3%)	43 (53.1%)	14 (63.6%)	17 (51.5%)	38 (36.2%)	171 (48.9%)
Professional development opportunities and activities provided by my agency are adequate/ sufficient to enhance my ability to do my job	560 (66.3%)	7 (58.3%)	5 (83.3%)	79 (64.8%)	41 (74.5%)	21 (77.8%)	22 (73.3%)	65 (80.2%)	16 (72.7%)	22 (64.7%)	73 (69.5%)	209 (59.5%)
The general public holds employees of child welfare in high proffessional esteem	223 (26.5%)	4 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	26 (21.5%)	21 (37.5%)	4 (14.8%)	14 (46.7%)	19 (23.5%)	5 (23.8%)	6 (17.6%)	38 (36.2%)	84 (24.1%)
If explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to me I would be better able to carry out my job duties and responsibilities	524 (62.2%)	8 (66.7%)	2 (33.3%)	81 (66.4%)	32 (57.1%)	11 (42.3%)	22 (73.3%)	50 (61.7%)	14 (66.7%)	19 (55.9%)	56 (53.3%)	229 (65.6%)
In this agency child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies	450 (53.3%)	5 (41.7%)	6 (100.0%)	72 (59.0%)	35 (63.6%)	22 (81.5%)	20 (66.7%)	50 (61.7%)	13 (59.1%)	23 (67.6%)	60 (57.1%)	144 (41.1%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce	610 (72.5%)	9 (75.0%)	6 (100.0%)	87 (71.9%)	45 (81.8%)	25 (92.6%)	23 (79.3%)	55 (68.8%)	18 (81.8%)	24 (70.6%)	76 (72.4%)	242 (69.1%)
I feel my agency has advocated for the children and families with whom we work	699 (83.0%)	12 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	96 (79.3%)	50 (90.9%)	26 (96.3%)	25 (83.3%)	68 (84.0%)	21 (95.5%)	29 (85.3%)	89 (85.6%)	277 (79.1%)
My peers are willing to support and assist one another when problems arise	806 (95.3%)	12 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	114 (93.4%)	56 (100.0%)	27 (100.0%)	28 (93.3%)	79 (97.5%)	22 (100.0%)	33 (97.1%)	98 (93.3%)	331 (94.3%)

Work Location

Approximately half of child protection professionals (47%; Table 3) reported working primarily from a county-based office with some flexibility to work off-site. This differed, however, for workers from northwest regions (Regions 1 and 2), who reported higher rates of working only in county-based offices (75% and 83% respectively) with less location flexibility. Additionally, workers in Region 11 (which includes the Twin Cities metro area) tended to work more remotely compared to other regions, with approximately a third (33%) reporting working primarily in a remote location. Surprisingly, given the great variability in work locations utilized by child welfare professionals across the state, a majority of professionals (83%) reported being satisfied with their primary work location.

Table 3.
Primary Work Locations of the Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Primary Work Location												
County-based office only	297 (35.1%)	9 (75.0%)	5 (83.3%)	60 (49.6%)	35 (62.5%)	9 (33.3%)	17 (56.7%)	27 (33.3%)	10 (45.5%)	18 (52.9%)	30 (28.6%)	77 (21.9%)
Primarily county-based office with some flexibility to work (e.g., home, community location, etc.)	400 (47.3%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	55 (45.5%)	21 (37.5%)	17 (63.0%)	12 (40.0%)	44 (54.3%)	12 (54.5%)	15 (44.1%)	66 (62.9%)	155 (44.2%)
Primarily remote location (e.g., home, community location, etc.) with individually-assigned county desk/office space available	36 (94.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.3%)	5 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	3 (2.9%)	23 (6.6%)
Primarily remote location (e.g., home, community location, etc.) with shared or communal county desk/office space available (e.g., hotel space, reservable space, communal space, etc.)	92 (10.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.0%)	86 (24.5%)
Remote location only (e.g., home community location, etc.)	8 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.9%)	5 (1.4%)
Other	12 (1.4%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.9%)	5 (1.4%)
Satisfaction with one's primary work location												
Yes	705 (83.4%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (12.4%)	4 (7.1%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (10.0%)	18 (22.2%)	3 (13.6%)	5 (14.7%)	20 (19.0%)	70 (19.9%)

Professionals were asked to offer suggestions related to what would improve the location in which they primarily conducted their work. Slightly less than half of all professionals (46%) provided a response. Responses fell into 11 categories, which can be seen in Figure 3 and are described in greater detail below.

Figure 3. Suggestions Offered by Professionals to Improve Primary Work Locations

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
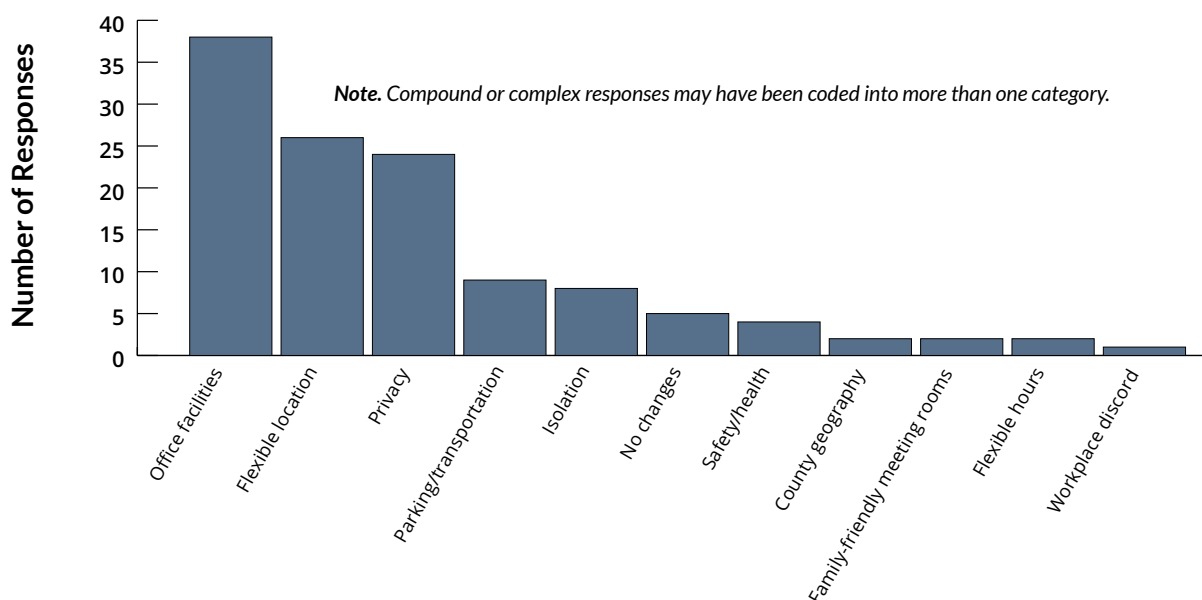
Need for better office facilities. Approximately a third of responding professionals gave answers regarding the need for better office facilities. Responses largely focused on requests for more space, better ergonomics (e.g., heating, air-conditioning, and lighting control) and more resources within the office building. Workers also highlighted the importance of having a space that can serve as a "home." For example:

"It would be beneficial to have assigned work spaces so you have a 'home.' I think I would go into the office more to see my coworkers which would assist in brainstorming and collaboration as well as the ability to ask about resources one may not know of."

Need for flexible work location. Approximately a fifth of professionals expressed their desire to work at least partially remotely, citing the need for after-hour work and quiet spaces to concentrate. One worker noted:

"I enjoy the location of my job, but much of it could be done from the home (data entry, case notes, etc). More flexibility on this front I believe would keep more workers in their positions. Child protection often requires after-hours work, so flexibility within location would be preferential."

Lack of privacy in the office. Professionals also identified privacy as a major issue. Several respondents noted that their office work environment was distracting, with noise (including co-worker conversations) disrupting their concentration. They noted the need for space for confidential conversations and a calmer environment. For example, one worker commented:

"We work in an open setting with cubicles, among multiple departments. This environment is far too public for the confidential information I work with, which has resulted in my leaving the office or staying after hours to make calls that require complete privacy."

Parking and transportation challenges. Some professionals indicated that parking and transportation issues negatively impacted their daily work. They discussed inadequate, difficult, expensive, or unsafe parking situations for both themselves and for families. For example, one worker noted the need for, "customer friendly space with free parking." Other issues identified included distance from bus routes and the non-central location of their office in the county.

Isolation in work settings. Professionals expressed concern that isolation from other social workers in their organization prevented opportunities for consultation and support. Most of these comments were from workers without assigned work stations, or those who were working from remote locations. For example, a worker expressed how not having an assigned desk and workspace impacted their feelings of isolation:

"I really miss having a desk of my own. I miss interacting with my team and being able to easily bounce ideas off of one another and processing cases with others on a daily basis. It has also impacted my work/life balance. Since so much of my work is done at home I often have trouble turning things off to have a break from work."

No changes needed. A small percentage (4%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their work location conditions and did not need to advocate for any change. For example, one satisfied worker reported:

"Nothing. I love the flexibility in work space. It makes my job satisfaction so much higher. I feel respected and treated as a professional [in my county]."

Safety/health environment concerns. Several professionals were concerned for their personal safety or indicated the need for a safer work environment. For example, one worker noted:

"Our office is not in a safe location. There have been multiple shootings and deaths in the parking lot of our office. People are selling drugs in the parking lot and often hassle us workers as we are walking to and from our vehicles/building."

County geography. Several professionals noted the large distances they needed to cover in their jobs, which impacted their ability to do their work. One worker specifically provided the following recommendation:

"Regionalize cases assigned to limit travel time, possibly having a satellite office (our county is fairly large)"

Family-friendly meeting rooms. Professionals expressed the need for more family-friendly meeting rooms. One worker noted specifically that their location needs:

"Better space for confidentiality and larger group space for family meetings, larger area equipped with learning toys for work with children."

Need for flexible hours. A few respondents suggested flexible working hours to improve job satisfaction. For example, this worker noted the importance of a flexible work schedule to meet the needs of both her family and that of her clients:

"Overall, a more flexible work schedule, that would meet the needs of my family, while continuing to meet the needs of the people I serve and the county agency I work for."

Workplace discord. Some professionals expressed concern about workplace discord and relationship issues. For example, one worker described:

"There are drastic differences in the style of social work and ways of practice between investigation/assessment and ongoing. This creates MANY job difficulties, disagreements, discord at work, in my direct work, in my relationships in the agency, etc etc etc."

Technology Needs

Technology plays a crucial role in child protection and child welfare work. As such, professionals were asked what hardware/devices and supports they needed to do their jobs well. Slightly more than half of professionals who responded to the survey (56%) provided an answer. Responses fell into 18 categories, while a small percentage of responses (5%) did not fall into any of the categories and were therefore categorized as "other" responses, as can be seen in Figure 4.

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
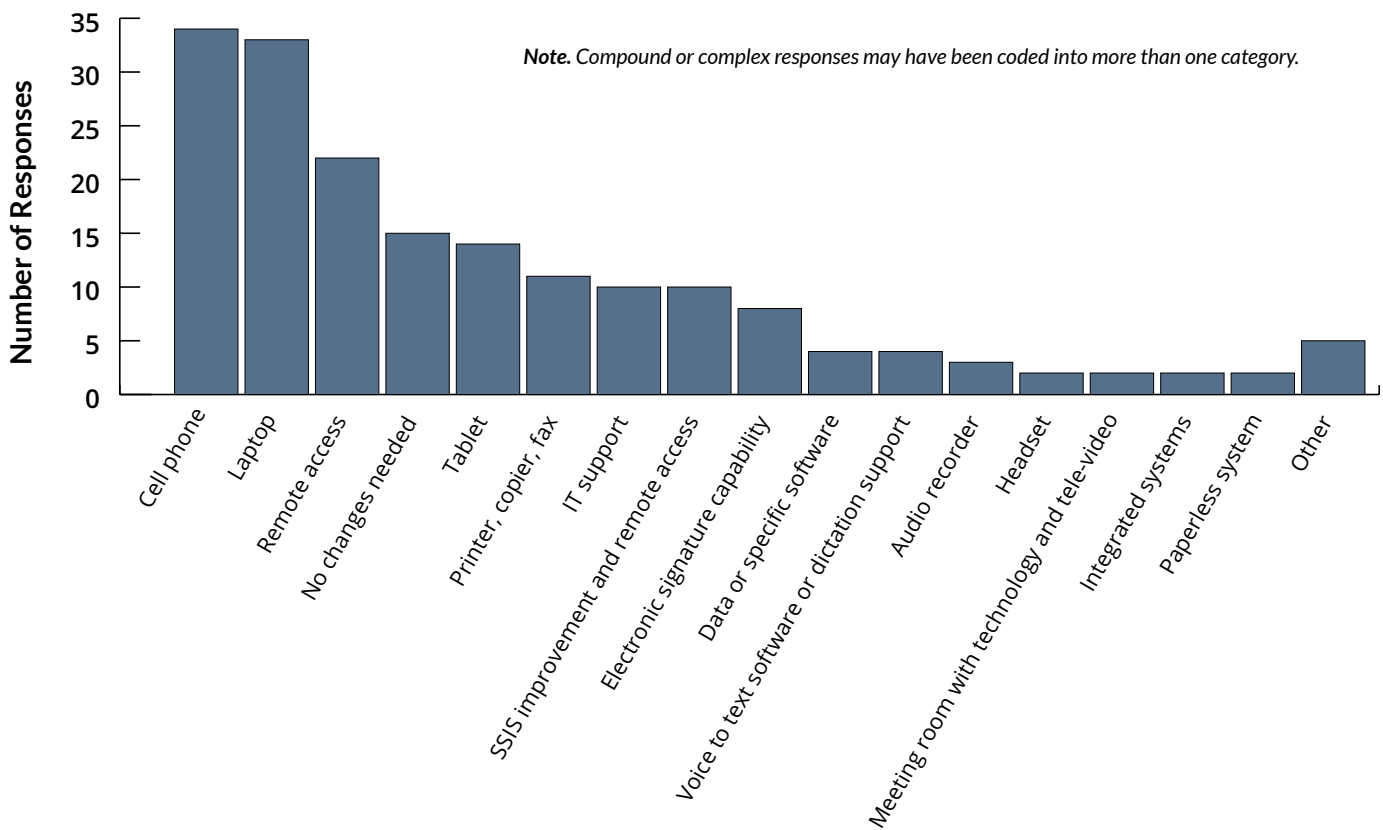
Need for cell phones and laptops with remote access. Professionals considered cell phones, laptops, and remote access the most crucial tools for their profession. Many professionals had agency-purchased cell phones while others mentioned the need for agency-purchased cell phones to avoid boundary issues and retain privacy. For example, one professional noted:

> *"A work provided cell phone would be beneficial for our contact with clients. Having the ability to text clients without using a different phone number on google voice would be helpful for our clients!"*

Many professionals also mentioned wanting laptops in the field with remote access, stating that they would save a considerable amount of time and reduce the burden of paperwork. For example, a professional stated they wanted a *"laptop computer with the ability to remote into SSIS from the field."*

No changes. Only 15% of professionals who provided a response to this question reported that they were satisfied with the technology their agency provided them.

Other technology needs. In line with the desire for remote access and a flexible worksite, several professionals had or wanted tablets with electronic signature capability so plans and forms could be completed electronically in a family's home without need for printing at the office and returning for signatures. One professional noted the need and benefits of switching to a paperless system:

> *"We need to have more digital capabilities - move to [a] more paperless system. Forms need to have capability of digital signatures. In my previous job, we were largely paperless and it worked wonderfully as files were always available, not only when we were physically in the office."*

Several professionals cited the need for portable printers/fax machines, discussing that electronic fax is still a commonly needed method of communication within counties and with DHS. Some professionals (10%) also mentioned the importance of both their agency's level of technological support and the role of SSIS in their ability to complete their job. Needs other professionals noted included specific software, voice to text software, audio recorders, headsets, meeting rooms with tele-video capabilities, more integrated software systems, and paper systems.

Workforce Well-being

Safety and Secondary Traumatic Stress

Statewide, Minnesota professionals are experiencing fear for their own and their families' safety. Specifically, approximately two-thirds (64%; Table 4) of professionals reported sometimes fearing for their personal safety due to the nature of their work, and slightly less than half (41%) of professionals reported sometimes fearing for the safety of their family due to the nature of their work. Interestingly, only a quarter of workers from Regions 1 and 11 reported sometimes fearing for the safety of their family due to the nature of their work.

Table 4.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of Safety

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I am sometimes afraid for my personal safety due to the nature of my work	539 (64.0%)	9 (75.0%)	2 (33.3%)	94 (77.1%)	38 (67.9%)	16 (59.3%)	21 (70.0%)	63 (78.8%)	16 (72.7%)	26 (76.5%)	71 (67.6%)	183 (52.6%)
I am sometimes afraid for the safety of my family members due to the nature of my work	345 (41.0%)	3 (25.0%)	1 (33.3%)	79 (64.8%)	31 (55.4%)	11 (40.7%)	15 (50.0%)	46 (57.5%)	13 (59.1%)	17 (50.0%)	43 (41.0%)	86 (24.8%)

A large number (88%; Table 5) of professionals reported having experienced Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) while carrying out their job duties. While a number of professionals (39%) agreed that STS has negatively affected their ability to carry out their job, 70% of professionals reported they have the supports needed to manage their STS. Region 2 was the only region that displayed different patterns of responses compared to statewide findings. Only a third of workers from Region 2 reported having experienced STS while carrying out their job and only 17% reported that STS had negatively affected their ability to carry out their job. Furthermore, all professionals from Region 2 reported having the supports needed to manage their STS.

Table 5.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Experiences 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	728 (87.9%)	10 (83.3%)	2 (33.3%)	109 (90.8%)	49 (89.1%)	23 (88.5%)	24 (82.8%)	73 (92.4%)	20 (90.9%)	28 (82.4%)	92 (88.5%)	298 (87.4%)
I have had the supports I needed to manage my secondary traumatic stress	557 (70.1%)	10 (90.9%)	6 (100.0%)	82 (68.3%)	36 (75.0%)	24 (92.3%)	20 (74.1%)	52 (68.4%)	17 (81.0%)	26 (81.3%)	78 (75.0%)	206 (63.6%)
Secondary traumatic stress has negatively affected my ability to carry out my job duties	313 (38.8%)	4 (36.4%)	1 (16.7%)	53 (44.9%)	17 (34.0%)	12 (46.2%)	9 (32.1%)	38 (49.4%)	8 (38.1%)	9 (27.3%)	33 (31.7%)	129 (38.9%)

Representing and Supporting Professionals from Diverse Communities

To begin addressing the disproportionate rates of involvement for children and families of color in Minnesota's child protection system, counties and tribes are attempting to recruit and retain professionals from diverse communities. Professionals were asked what actions they would like their agencies to take to hire and support professionals from diverse communities. Slightly less than half of professionals (44%) provided a response. Responses fell into 11 categories, as seen in Figure 5, and are described further below.

Figure 5.
Methods Identified to Hire and Support Professionals from Diverse Communities

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
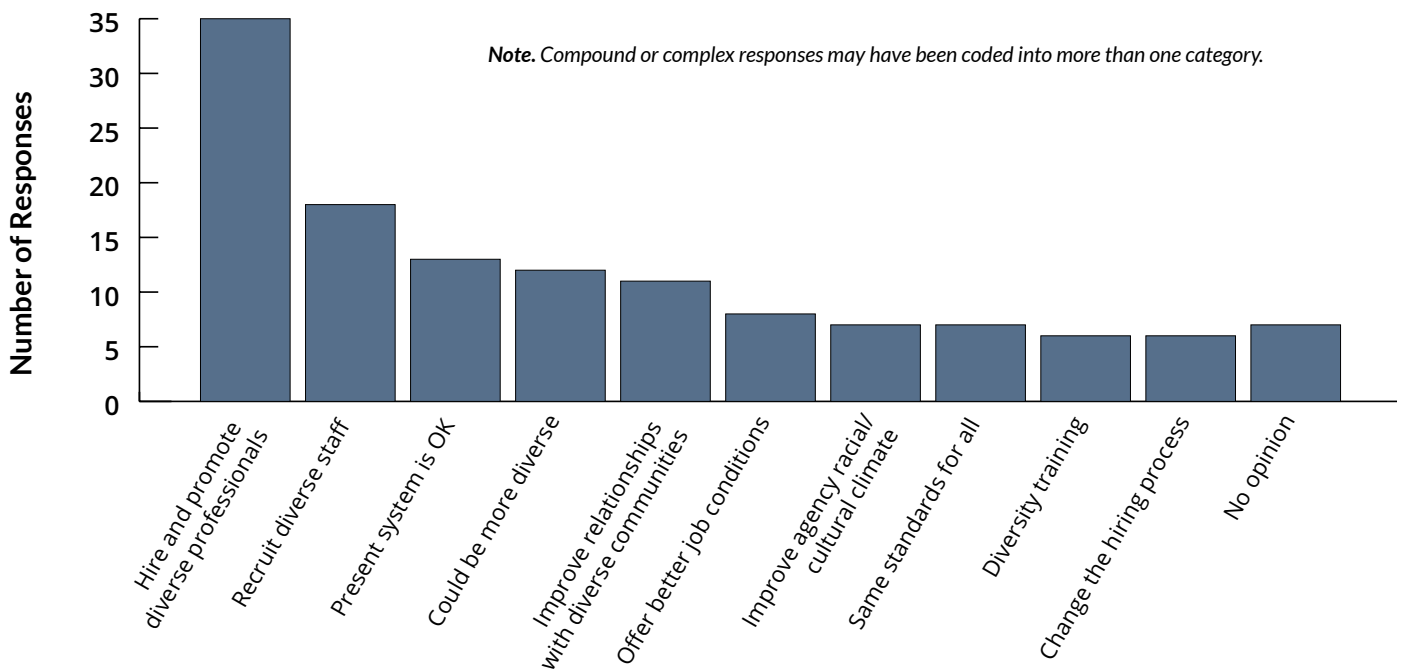
Hire and promote diverse professionals.
Approximately a third of the professionals answering this question provided responses in support of hiring and promoting diverse professionals in the workforce. Several professionals emphasized the need for better training opportunities and financial support for education or experiences to increase the supply of diverse candidates as well as the need for promotion of people of color into higher supervisor and administrative levels. For example, one professional commented:

"Advance current employees of color to supervisory, management and administrative positions. Create an environment that attracts people of color and retains current employees of color with such strategies as: mandatory trainings on privilege and implicit bias, having an expectation that a basic skill required to do this job is cultural awareness and ability to communicate cross-culturally and that this is reflected in interviews."

Recruit diverse staff. Though a minority of professionals who responded to the question did not see the need for increasing the hiring of persons of color, the majority did. Approximately one fifth of professionals offered suggestions related to recruiting diverse staff. Examples included recruiting within high schools and universities, offering

loan reimbursements, paid internships and other educational opportunities, and improving relationships with communities of color. For example, one professional suggested:

"More recruitment at the high school level to encourage more persons of color to enter into social work programs and more ways for them to get scholarships or connect with community resources that might be able to help them with financial assistance or assistance with college paperwork."

Some professionals noted there was little diversity in the workforce in rural counties. Some discussed that there were few diverse applicants in their counties, while others mentioned that diverse applicants may not want to come to the area because of the lack of diversity in the community. Still, others mentioned that their rural county was diverse but they still lacked diverse applicants. One worker spoke of the difficulty of recruiting professionals from diverse communities:

"This is difficult for our agency to do as we are a rural area with a predominantly White community. Finding professionals from diverse communities would be difficult as they likely would not want to come to a rural area."

The present system is ok. A small number of responding professionals indicated that they were

satisfied with how their agency is hiring diverse staff. Some professionals mentioned that there were few people of color in their counties and that they were satisfied with a mostly White staff. Others mentioned that larger, urban counties were doing an effective job of hiring a diverse workforce. One worker noted that their agency is doing a good job regarding efforts to recruit diverse staff:

> *"Our agency works very hard to be inclusive and have awareness to have those difficult ongoing conversations."*

We could be more diverse. About 10% of professionals said their agency or clientele should be more diverse. For example, a worker stated a lack of diversity in their office and concerns about whether their agency was actually willing to hire someone from a community not currently represented within their workforce:

> *"I work in a primarily White community and there is little to no diversity in our office. Are we being open minded if someone from a diverse community applied?"*

Offer better job conditions. Several professionals noted that the problem of retention of diverse staff might be improved if conditions were improved, such as higher pay, lower caseloads, and access to mentoring. One worker noted the importance of not just recruiting professionals of color, but also retaining them:

> *"The ability to recruit and RETAIN professionals of color is lacking. We may be able to get people in the door but the toxic and really dysfunctional work environment is not one that makes for retention."*

Improve relationships with diverse communities. Some professionals recommended developing or improving relationships with diverse communities and encouraging the agency to develop or strengthen partnerships with those communities. Specifically, one professional noted the lack of effort, despite the clear need, to make these partnerships:

> *"There doesn't seem to be a concerted effort to participate in community events/conversations/meetings to help improve the overall image of our agency. Why would people in communities of color want to work for a system they distrust? Is anyone sitting down with the local NAACP chapter, for instance, to talk about what we can do differently/better and explain what we are doing that's better than we did 20 years ago?"*

Improve agency cultural/ethnicity climate. Just over 10% of professionals commented on the need to improve racial/cultural climate in their agencies. Specifically, professionals mentioned microaggressions, and lack of support and equity felt by people of color. For example, one worker noted:

> *"I believe our agency is making good progress in this area. However, I also see that employees of color have negative experiences with coworkers and I worry that bias and prejudice within our agency as it relates to staff to staff interaction is not addressed appropriately."*

Other professionals emphasized the need to shift work culture to include values held by people of color and bring in leaders of color from the community to present to agency staff. Several professionals noted that they wanted to see actions about diversity instead of just words to improve the image of the agency. For example, one professional recommended specific actions to improve the cultural climate:

> *"Provide better bias/racism training for White workers in order to help lessen the occurrence of microaggression toward POC in our workplaces. Work with the Diversity and Inclusion committee to brainstorm ways to keep [people of color] in their jobs since the turnover rate of child protection workers of color is higher than those of White child protection workers."*

Same standards for all. In contrast to emphasizing hiring for diversity, seven percent of professionals thought their agency should hire or does hire the best qualified candidate without looking at race or ethnicity (or other aspects of diversity), insisting on using the same standards for everyone. For example, one professional responded:

> *"I would like to see the agency hire and support the best candidate for any job opening looking at the broad picture for the needs of our agency and to not make a hiring decision based on the culture of the applicant."*

Diversity training. A small percentage of professionals identified the need for diversity training for staff, including those in leadership and management positions. For example, one professional noted the need to provide trainings as well as consistent check-ins with staff:

"Offer more trainings to those already hired to increase their cultural competency, meaning that they will consider needing time to attend trainings. Provide case planning training on how to include cultural information in the plan and consistently check in on this subject. Create a resource guide specifically for cultural needs."

Change the hiring process. Several professionals recommended specific changes in the application and interview processes, such as having people of color and tribal members serve on interview panels. For example, one worker recommended:

"When candidates are applying for a position, have a diverse team interview that candidate. It is imperative that the professionals that work with our families look like the families we serve; this helps foster trust and makes it easier for families to relate to the professionals."

No opinion. A small number of responding professionals commented that they had no opinion on this topic.

Diversity Climate in the Workplace

Professionals were also asked what they would want child welfare leadership to know about the diversity climates at their agencies. Forty one percent of professionals provided a response. Responses fell into seven categories, as seen in Figure 6, and are further detailed below.

Figure 6.
Professionals' Perceptions of the Diversity Climate in Their Agency

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
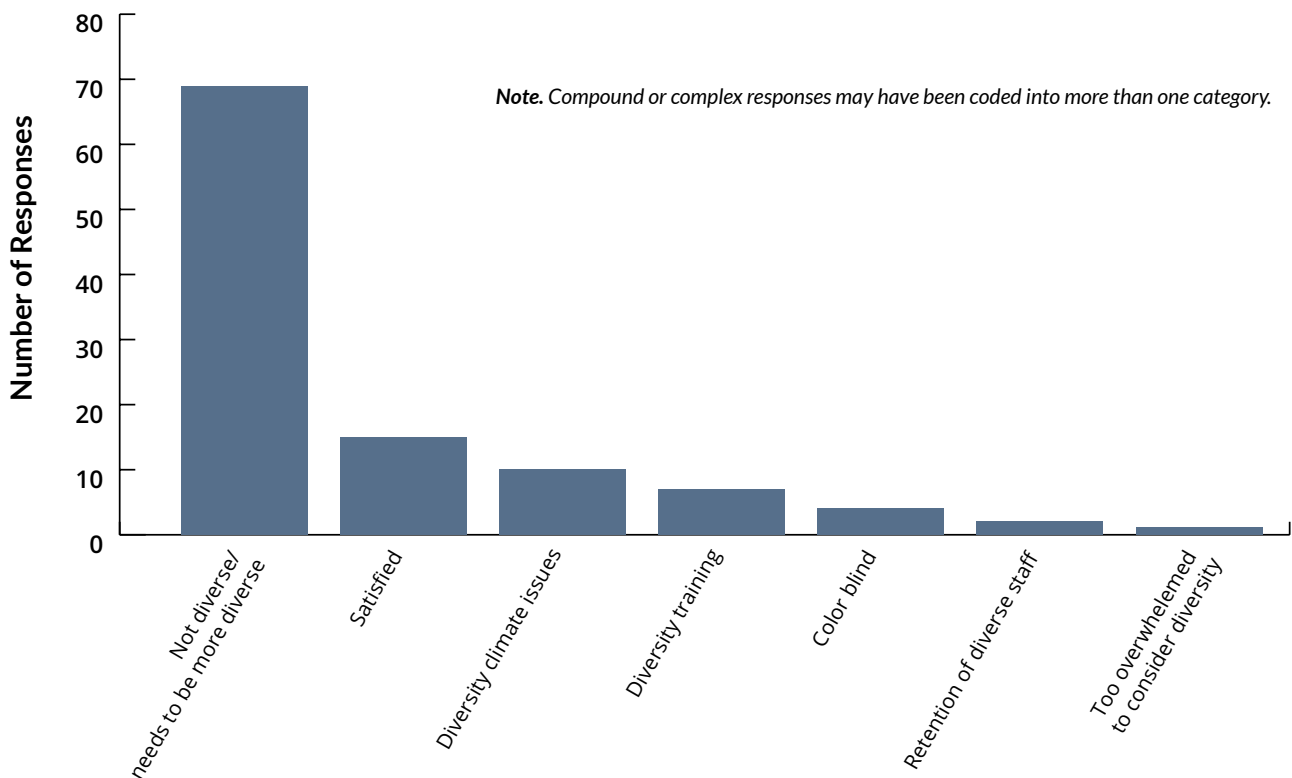
Not diverse or needs to be more diverse. Over half of the professionals answering this question stated that their agency staff or their county population was not diverse or was minimally diverse. For example, one worker noted that "The diversity climate at my agency is primarily White women." Additionally, a fourth wanted leadership to know their agency needs to be more diverse or more diversity friendly. For example, one professional noted the lack of diversity and the need for social workers to understand the culture of the clients with whom they work:

> *"The population of our county is continuing to become more diverse, and our professional workforce needs to reflect that. Some of our clients, rightfully so, have expressed that we as White social workers do not understand their culture. Within our agency we do a great job of consulting with one another, but this consultation would be so much more valuable if we had more diverse experiences and backgrounds."*

Satisfied with agency diversity climate. Fifteen percent of professionals reported that they were satisfied with the diversity in their county or the efforts made by their agencies. For example, one professional noted that their administration "is planful in improving the diverse climate at my agency." Another noted that "there is a mutual respect among staff that is heartwarming and healthy."

Agency has diversity climate issues. One out of every ten professionals stated that there were diversity climate issues at their agency, and, specifically, that individuals were treated unfairly based on their race or other cultural dimensions. For example, a professional noted specific issues they see at their agency:

> *"We are not a very diverse county in general, and not a very diverse agency either.. but I have noticed that our caseloads are very diverse, there are definitely some trends here. I have heard casually racist/xenophobic/ transphobic comments in the office, like workers who don't want to provide services for human beings they consider 'illegal.' I think as a whole, our agency could strongly benefit from thoughtful diversity training… and not just talking about barriers that some people face, but how those barriers came to be so that we can work together to tear them down. We can't change what we won't acknowledge."*

Diversity training. Seven percent of professionals commented on the need for diversity training in their agency or the manner in which training was implemented. Some workers commented on the need for all staff, including upper management, to have diversity training. Others discussed that though training was required, it was implemented in an unnatural way that impacted the effectiveness of the training. For example, one worker noted:

> *"There is an attempt to promote diversity, but the actions do not coincide. Instead of letting it happen naturally with sitting together as units, it is 'forced' upon workers with required training on diversity, often then being grouped with people that don't work with or will never see again."*

Color blind. Four percent of professionals mentioned that their agency should be "color blind" and have the same quality baseline requirements for all staff. For example, one professional commented:

> *"We have a very diverse agency. I have been told by a supervisor they specifically hired a candidate because of their ethnicity. That isn't right; people should be hired because they are the best person for the job."*

Retention of diverse staff. Two percent of professionals reported that their county was having a difficult time retaining diverse staff once hired. For example, when one worker was commenting on recruiting diverse staff, they noted, "We seem to get folks in but not retain them."

Too overwhelmed to consider diversity. An additional one percent of professionals noted that they were too overwhelmed to consider diversity in the workforce. For example, one worker commented the following about their agency's diversity climate and with respect to ICWA requirements:

> *"These are the things I do not have time for. We don't see the disproportionate rates in this county. We see families struggling from all races. The ICWA requirements are very time consuming and in almost every case result in no ICWA. It is difficult to get anyone wanting to do child protection no matter their diversity and there is huge turnover."*

Effects of Child Protection and Child Welfare Work on Personal Health and Well-being

Professionals working in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency were asked to reflect on their physical and mental well-being as part of the workforce survey. Three-fourths (76%; Table 6) of professionals reported that they are able to create balance between their jobs and their personal/family life, and a majority (90%) of professionals used self-care activities to cope with the stresses of their job. However, a significant number of professionals reported that their job negatively impacts their well-being. Specifically, some workers reported that their job negatively impacts their ability to focus, be "present", prioritize, organize, and attend to detail (38%), and that their job negatively impacts their mental (53%) and physical (43%) health. It is particularly critical to note that over a third (36%) of professionals reported using unhealthy behaviors to cope with the stresses of their job. The issues of how professionals' work affects their physical and mental well-being were widespread and consistent across the state.

Table 6.
Effects of Child Protection Work on the Workforce

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
My job negatively impacts my ability to focus, be "present", prioritize, organize, attend to detail, etc.	316 (37.7%)	4 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	63 (52.1%)	20 (36.4%)	8 (29.6%)	6 (20.0%)	34 (42.5%)	11 (50.0%)	7 (21.2%)	39 (37.1%)	123 (35.3%)
My job negatively impacts my physical health	363 (43.3%)	5 (41.7%)	1 (16.7%)	57 (47.5%)	28 (50.9%)	9 (33.3%)	12 (40.0%)	36 (45.0%)	11 (50.0%)	12 (35.3%)	39 (37.5%)	153 (43.8%)
My job negatively impacts my mental health	441 (52.8%)	4 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	79 (65.8%)	31 (57.4%)	12 (44.4%)	15 (50.0%)	47 (58.8%)	13 (59.1%)	15 (44.1%)	57 (54.3%)	166 (48.0%)
I use self-care activities to cope with the stress of my job	752 (89.5%)	11 (91.7%)	6 (100.0%)	105 (86.8%)	51 (92.7%)	22 (81.5%)	26 (86.7%)	71 (88.9%)	18 (81.8%)	33 (97.1%)	99 (94.3%)	310 (89.1%)
I use unhealthy behaviors to cope with the stress of my job	299 (35.7%)	2 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	44 (37.0%)	22 (40.0%)	12 (44.4%)	8 (26.7%)	33 (41.3%)	8 (36.4%)	8 (23.5%)	34 (32.7%)	126 (36.2%)
I am able to create balance between my job and my personal/family life	637 (76.2%)	10 (83.3%)	6 (100.0%)	88 (72.7%)	46 (86.8%)	20 (74.1%)	24 (80.0%)	59 (74.7%)	20 (90.9%)	29 (85.3%)	80 (76.2%)	255 (73.5%)

Professionals were asked what they do to build and maintain their well-being. Over half (63%) of professionals provided a response. This was the highest response rate of all free form questions, indicating a topic of major relevance to professionals. Responses to managing well-being showed a robust number of ways professionals dealt with stress and secondary trauma associated with their job responsibilities. Professionals provided a list of 82 self-care items or groups of items that we coded into 22 categories (Figure 7). Most professionals indicated that they utilized several methods of well-being management, with an average of 3.5 methods per worker.

Figure 7.
Methods Identified Child Protection Professionals Manage Their Own Well-being

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
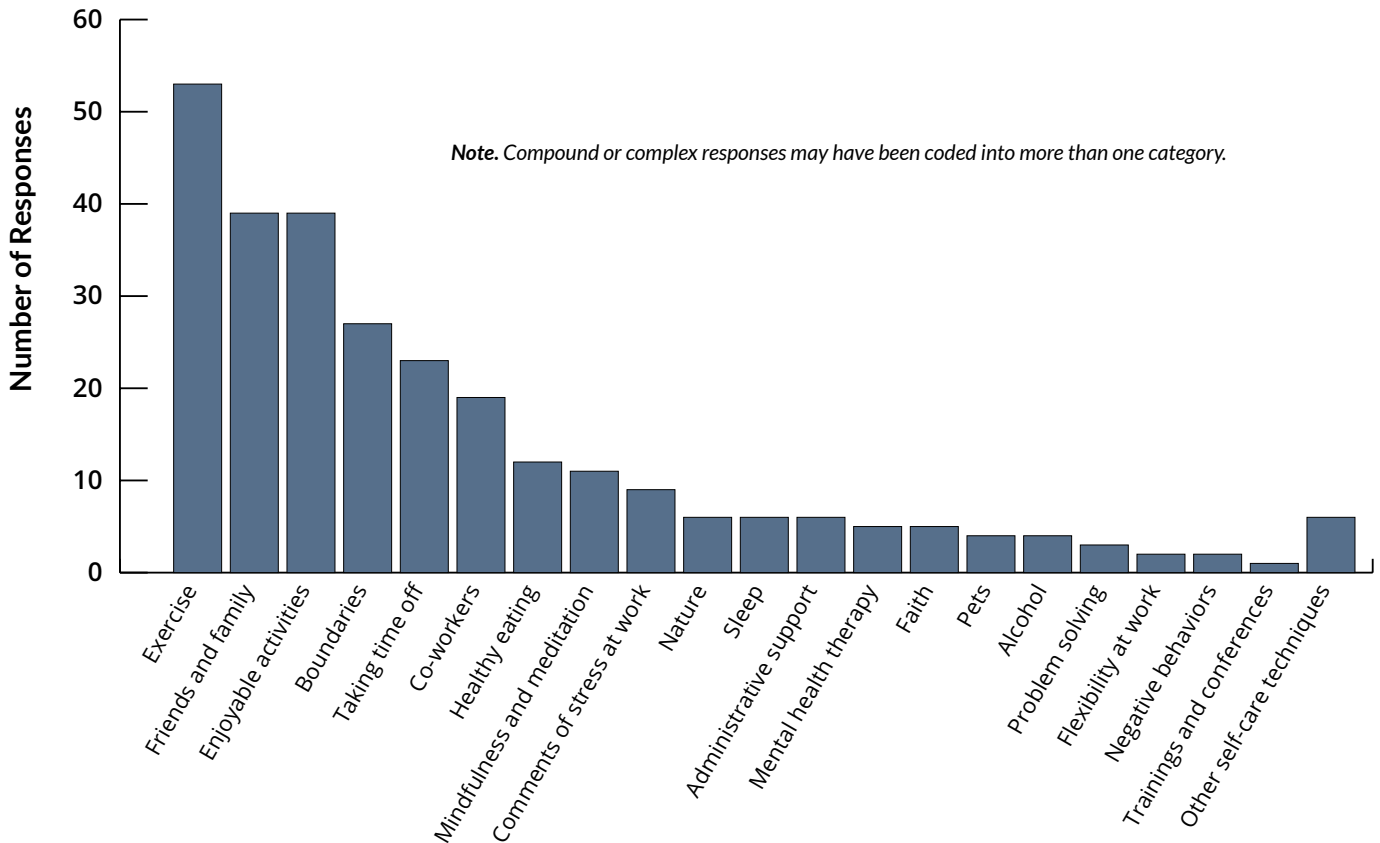
Exercise, interaction with friends and family, and enjoyable activities. The most commonly mentioned categories of managing well-being included exercise, interaction with friends and family, and enjoyable activities. Half of responding professionals (53%) listed going to the gym or an exercise class, participating in sports, or doing other physical workouts to manage stress. Additionally, approximately 40% of professionals discussed spending time with family and friends or engaging in enjoyable activities to ameliorate the effects of their job. For example, professionals mentioned many hobbies, including watching TV, reading, dancing, cooking, and going to concerts.

Need for boundaries. One fourth of professionals emphasized the need for establishing boundaries, such as leaving work at the workplace, to maintain their well-being. Professionals commented on the need to be strict with work hours and avoid doing overtime despite the overbearing expectations of their jobs. For example, one worker noted the importance of stepping away from work at the end of the work day:

> *"Attempt to 'turn it off' when the clock strikes 4:30 and be present at home. 'Work' while working, 'home,' while at home. Spending time with my wife and children and being present for them allows me to disconnect from work."*

Taking time off. One fourth of professionals also cited the importance of taking time off for themselves. Workers, for example, commented on the need to "take personal days off of work" and "Use your PTO!." Furthermore, some workers noted the importance of taking vacations to separate from work. For example, one worker commented:

> *"I attempt to take time away. I have very clear boundaries. For example, if I am out on a vacation day, I will not be available for any communication related to work. I need that time to actually shut off and be fully away."*

Importance of co-worker support. A fifth of professionals identified the importance of support from their co-workers in managing the stress of their job. One professional noted the benefits of "processing cases and case issues by talking with co-workers." Relatedly, another worker noted that they "find that it is easier to share my pain versus keeping it to myself and trying to manage it on my own.

Physical health-promoting behaviors. Some professionals mentioned healthy eating, getting sleep, and going out in nature to help with their job-related stress. For example, a professional mentioned they "stay active, eat healthy, socialize, do outdoor activities-fresh air, walks, breaks" to deal with stress.

Many professionals also reported using mindfulness techniques and meditation to manage their well-being. Many discussed the importance of these techniques for dealing with the stress that comes along with child protection work. One worker described specific mindfulness activities that helped them deal with the "horrific life circumstances" they witnessed in their job:

> *"I make room for quiet time, time without deadlines or needing to be managed. I garden, fish - year round, be aware of the beauty that surrounds us everyday."*

Negative behaviors. Several professionals identified using negative behaviors to cope with their work stress. Specifically, workers mentioned using alcohol or cigarettes, binge-watching television, isolating themselves, or being too tired to engage in self-care. For example, one worker reported that to attempt to manage their well-being they "Drink too much, eat too much, avoid public spaces."

Faith-based activities. A number identified their faith-based activities, such as going to church, praying, and engaging with their faith community, as essential forms of maintaining their well-being. For example, one worker noted that they manage their work stress by being "an active member at my church and have a strong faith community."

Other. Professionals mentioned several other ways they maintained their well-being. For example, professionals mentioned they comment on their stress at their workplace, receive administrative support, receive mental health therapy, spend time with their pets, engage in problem solving, have flexibility at work, attend trainings and conferences, and utilize other self-care techniques.

Supervision

Statewide, a vast majority of professionals reported that their supervisors trust their decision-making and ability to do their job (92%; Table 7), are willing to help when problems arise (90%), care about them as a person (91%), and recognize the strengths they bring to the agency (91%). Workers also generally reported having good communication with their supervisors, with 81% of workers reporting that they and their supervisors share work experiences with one another to improve the effectiveness of client services, with 81% of professionals agreeing that they could talk about difficult things with their supervisor.

Furthermore, 79% of professionals agreed that they receive adequate supervision/guidance/support from their immediate supervisor. However, nearly half (46%) of professionals responded that the supervision they receive centers around administrative monitoring and compliance as opposed to support or education. Regional patterns were similar to statewide findings, except fewer workers from Region 1 reported that they could talk about difficult things with their supervisors (58%) compared to statewide findings (81%).

Table 7.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of Supervision

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
The supervision I receive centers around administrative monitoring and compliance as opposed to support or education	385 (45.9%)	6 (50.0%)	2 (33.3%)	48 (39.7%)	32 (57.1%)	8 (30.8%)	15 (50.0%)	47 (58.8%)	8 (36.4%)	9 (26.5%)	38 (36.5%)	172 (49.4%)
I receive adequate supervision, guidance, and support from my immediate supervisor	666 (79.1%)	9 (75.0%)	6 (100.0%)	90 (73.8%)	49 (89.1%)	24 (88.9%)	24 (80.0%)	61 (76.3%)	20 (90.9%)	29 (85.3%)	83 (79.1%)	271 (77.7%)
My supervisor trusts my decision-making and my ability to do my job	772 (91.7%)	11 (91.7%)	6 (100.0%)	111 (91.0%)	55 (98.2%)	23 (85.2%)	28 (93.3%)	71 (88.8%)	21 (95.5%)	33 (97.1%)	93 (88.6%)	320 (92.0%)
I find that my supervisor is willing to help when problems arise	759 (90.1%)	9 (75.0%)	6 (100.0%)	108 (89.3%)	52 (96.3%)	27 (100.0%)	26 (86.7%)	69 (86.3%)	21 (95.5%)	31 (91.2%)	95 (90.5%)	315 (90.5%)
My supervisor cares about me as a person	762 (90.7%)	11 (91.7%)	5 (100.0%)	112 (91.8%)	52 (92.9%)	26 (96.3%)	24 (80.0%)	75 (93.8%)	21 (95.5%)	32 (94.1%)	97 (92.4%)	307 (88.5%)
I can talk about difficult things with my supervisor	684 (81.2%)	7 (58.3%)	5 (83.3%)	98 (80.3%)	49 (87.5%)	26 (96.3%)	24 (80.0%)	59 (73.8%)	20 (90.9%)	29 (85.3%)	88 (83.8%)	279 (80.2%)
My supervisor recognizes the strengths I bring to my agency	764 (90.7%)	12 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	112 (91.8%)	53 (96.4%)	27 (100.0%)	27 (90.0%)	70 (87.5%)	21 (95.5%)	32 (94.1%)	94 (89.5%)	310 (88.8%)
My supervisor and I share work experiences with one another to improve effectiveness of client services	680 (80.9%)	8 (66.7%)	6 (100.0%)	102 (83.6%)	48 (87.3%)	26 (96.3%)	24 (80.0%)	55 (68.8%)	20 (90.9%)	26 (76.5%)	83 (79.0%)	282 (81.0%)

Workforce Stability

Intentions to remain employed in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency, and particularly in professionals' current agencies, was a large focus of the Minnesota Child Welfare Stabilization Survey. Equally crucial to measuring workforce stability is understanding workers' retirement and career plans, as they play a large part in workforce stability. In this section of the survey, we asked professionals to identify their intentions to remain in the field and in their current agencies, and to identify job-seeking activities in which they participated in the past year.

Career Plans

Approximately three quarters (71%; Table 8) of the professionals indicated that they intended to make a long-term career in the broader child protection field when they took their current position. Across the state, 21% of professionals reported that they had plans to retire within the next ten years. When asked specifically about the length of time they intended to work before retiring, nearly half (42%) of professionals who had plans to retire reported that they were planning on doing so within the next five years.

Table 8.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Retirement and Career Plans

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Plan to retire in the next 10 yrs	157 (21.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (22.1%)	3 (6.3%)	4 (16.0%)	6 (22.2%)	16 (24.2%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (10.0%)	13 (15.9%)	88 (26.0%)
Years Plan to Retire												
1 yr	12 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (6.7%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	7 (8.4%)
2 yrs	13 (8.8%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	2 (16.7%)	10 (12.0%)
3 yrs	8 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (26.7%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.4%)
4 yrs	6 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.8%)
5 yrs	23 (15.5%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	4 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	2 (16.7%)	14 (16.9%)
6 yrs	9 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (8.4%)
7 yrs	6 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (13.3%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.8%)
8 yrs	8 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (6.7%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	2 (16.7%)	4 (4.8%)
9 yrs	7 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50.0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (6.7%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.6%)
10 yrs	31 (20.9%)	1 (100.0%)	N/A	4 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (6.7%)	N/A	3 (100.0%)	3 (25.0%)	17 (20.5%)
11+ yrs	25 (16.9%)	0 (0.0%)	N/A	6 (27.3%)	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (20.0%)	N/A	0 (0.0%)	3 (25.0%)	11 (13.3%)
Intent for Long-term Career in Child Protection												
Yes	523 (71.0%)	5 (83.3%)	4 (66.7%)	69 (67.6%)	29 (60.4%)	19 (76.0%)	19 (70.4%)	39 (61.9%)	11 (64.7%)	20 (69.0%)	58 (71.6%)	250 (75.1%)

Job-Seeking

Professionals were categorized as movers (those who had applied or interviewed for another position within the field), leavers (those who were intending to leave child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency), or stayers (those who were not looking for a job) based on their reported job-seeking activity in the past 12 months. Approximately half of professionals (54%; Table 9) were categorized as stayers; a quarter (26%) were categorized as movers; and a fifth (21%) were categorized as leavers. The workforce in the northwest regions (Regions 1 and 2) was made up of more stayers (83% and 80%, respectively) and fewer movers (0% for both regions) compared to the statewide findings.

Table 9.
Past 12 Months: Stayers, Movers, Leavers

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Stayers	390 (53.6%)	5 (83.3%)	4 (80.0%)	61 (59.8%)	30 (62.5%)	8 (32.0%)	16 (59.3%)	30 (48.4%)	8 (47.1%)	14 (48.3%)	49 (60.5%)	165 (50.6%)
Movers	187 (25.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (14.7%)	9 (18.8%)	12 (48.0%)	8 (29.6%)	25 (40.3%)	5 (29.4%)	10 (34.5%)	17 (21.0%)	86 (26.4%)
Leavers	151 (20.7%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (20.0%)	26 (25.5%)	9 (18.8%)	5 (20.0%)	3 (11.1%)	7 (11.3%)	4 (23.5%)	5 (17.2%)	15 (18.5%)	75 (23.0%)

Similarly, professionals were asked about their job-seeking intentions for the **next 12 months**. Professionals were categorized in the same way as described above — as movers, leavers, or stayers — with one unique exception. A fourth category of *contemplators* emerged, which represented those who reported *both* wanting to stay and also being interested in looking for other positions. The majority of professionals (78%; Table 10) were categorized as stayers, while about 12% of professionals were classified as contemplators, another 4% as movers, and the remaining 6% as leavers. Regional findings indicated that, proportionally, more contemplators were coming from Regions 6, 7, and 8 and more leavers were coming from Region 3 (which includes Duluth).

Table 10.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Job Seeking Intentions in the Upcoming 12 Months

|	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Stayers	559 (78.1%)	5 (100.0%)	6 (100.0%)	77 (77.8%)	39 (83.0%)	22 (88.0%)	21 (77.8%)	43 (17.5%)	13 (81.3%)	27 (93.1%)	67 (84.8%)	239 (74.2%)
Contemplators	87 (12.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (5.1%)	4 (8.5%)	1 (4.0%)	5 (18.5%)	11 (18.0%)	3 (18.8%)	2 (6.9%)	7 (8.9%)	49 (15.2%)
Movers	26 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)	14 (4.3%)
Leavers	44 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (13.1%)	3 (6.4%)	2 (8.0%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)	20 (6.2%)

Factors to Increase Likelihood of Staying

Across the state, a majority (92%; Table 11) of professionals agreed that increased salary would boost the likelihood of them staying in their current positions for the next 12 months. Furthermore, having fewer administrative requirements (80%), additional professional development opportunities (74%), a lower caseload (74%), and better benefits (73%), were all important potential incentives for improving

workforce stability. These trends were stable across all regions.

Professionals were asked if there was anything else that would increase their likelihood of staying in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency. Slightly less than a quarter (22%) of professionals provided a response. Professionals' responses fell into eight categories, described in further detail below (Figure 8).

Figure 8.
Changes Identified Child Protection Professionals Support Workforce Retention

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
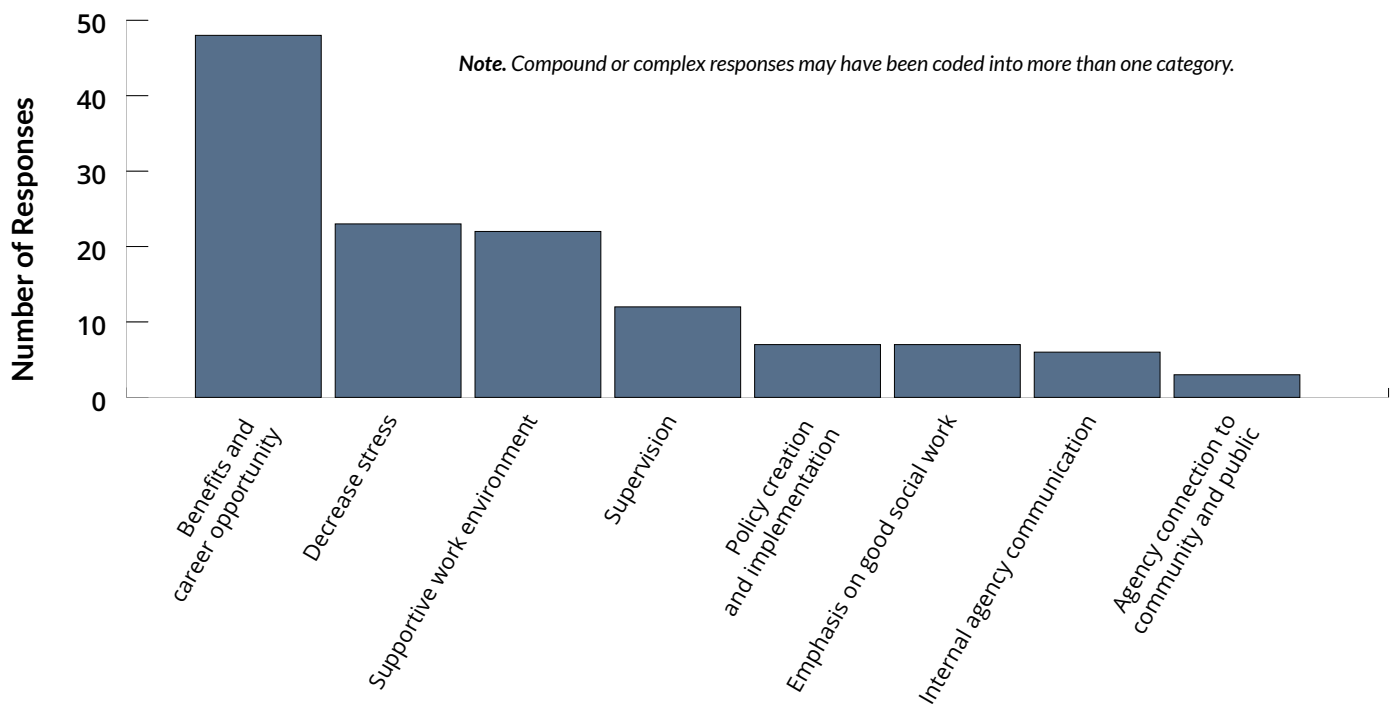
Increase benefits and career opportunities. Almost half (48%) of the professionals who provided a response indicated that benefits and career opportunities were most likely to increase their likelihood of staying in the field. Most professionals in this category discussed the need for higher pay to compensate for the difficulty of the job. For example, one worker noted:

> *"I think higher pay is important. It is tough work, however if people are paid fairly they will be more likely to stay in the field longer."*

Decrease stress. Slightly less than a quarter (23%) of professionals responding to this question noted that their child protection jobs are extremely difficult, and sometimes nearly impossible. Workers discussed the demands of paperwork, the challenges of using

SSIS as a case management tool, and the emphasis on monitoring and accountability rather than meeting the needs of struggling families. One worker noted their frustration with SSIS requirements:

> *"SSIS has become a monster that takes us away from clients' kitchen tables, and puts us 60%+ of the time on our computer."*

Another discussed the challenges and stressors that are a common part of the job:

> *"Social work is a very hard profession, especially child protection. We are overworked, used, and have no support. Clients threaten to sue us often, some child protection workers have been attacked and we are not even notified about it and the lack of safety training or genuine support is really upsetting and emotionally draining from an already very difficult job."*

Some workers also discussed flexibility in work hours and location and the opportunity for career advancement. Others identified the need to lower caseloads to a more reasonable level to be able to adequately serve their families. For example, this worker commented on the impacts of a large caseload:

> *"The caseload size is unmanageable. It is the largest stressor in my life both at work and in my personal life. I feel overwhelmed each day and I know I'm not doing my best work for the families I serve."*

Supportive work environment. Slightly less than a fourth (22%) of professionals noted that creating a more supportive work environment at their agencies would increase their desire to remain in their current positions. Workers noted the importance of a cohesive work environment and feeling valued in the workplace. One worker noted that they "do not like coming to an office where people pop in and sit randomly" while another noted that their agency does not support their workers and "they are treated [as] if they are disposable."

Supervision. Some professionals described the need for more effective supervision. Many workers noted the importance of consistency and transparency from their supervisors. One worker noted the need to train supervisors to better understand the trauma their workers are going through on a daily basis:

> *"Teaching supervisors to supervise their employees in CPS through a trauma lens, as caseworkers are mandated to work in trauma and high stress situations daily. It is often something that is often brushed over."*

Policy creation and implementation. Seven percent of professionals discussed that better and more consistent communication about policy changes would increase their intent to stay in their current positions. Workers mentioned that they wanted input into policy changes and the chance to discuss how those changes would impact the workforce. Some workers also noted that they needed more direction on the implementation of new policies. For example, one worker noted:

> *"More communication about policy changes; for example the Sibling Bill of Rights was rolled out with absolutely no direction from DHS."*

Another worker said:

> *"Sometimes we are sent a new policy change [at the] last minute and expected to apply it to our work within weeks without proper training, without any examples etc."*

Emphasis on good social work. Some professionals noted that the ability to focus on doing good social work, and ultimately helping families, would increase their intent to stay. For example, a worker noted:

> *"Right now I am told that my job is to refer clients for services and focus on case management. As a social worker, I find it difficult to simply refer and do paperwork. I want to be involved on a deeper level and have opportunities to bring about change."*

Internal agency communication. Some professionals discussed the need for improvement in communication across departments. For example, one worker noted the need to re-design communication efforts within their department to create a more efficient workflow:

> *"A revamp of the entire Department. There are way too many departments to go through to get a piece of information or documents."*

Agency connections to the community. Three percent of professionals said their agency needed to increase public relations within their communities to lessen inaccurate, negative public perceptions of child protection workers, which would make them more likely to stay in their current positions. For example, one professional noted the impact of negative public perception and stereotypes on their job:

> *"Make the public understand we are not out stealing children for the fun of it. Public perception is 100% of the hatefulness of our job. If people worked with us and saw the need for the changes and believe that we are truthful, not lying thieves."*

Table 11.
Table 11.
Factors Identified by Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce as Important for Retention

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
Different work hours	299 (41.3%)	4 (66.7%)	3 (50.0%)	36 (35.3%)	22 (45.8%)	8 (32.0%)	11 (40.7%)	38 (62.3%)	9 (52.9%)	12 (44.4%)	28 (35.4%)	128 (39.3%)
Better benefits	531 (73.4%)	4 (66.7%)	4 (66.7%)	65 (63.7%)	35 (74.5%)	19 (76.0%)	19 (70.4%)	55 (91.7%)	15 (88.2%)	25 (89.3%)	58 (73.4%)	232 (71.2%)
Increased salary	668 (91.5%)	6 (100.0%)	5 (83.3%)	93 (91.2%)	42 (87.5%)	22 (88.0%)	22 (81.5%)	58 (95.1%)	17 (100.0%)	26 (92.9%)	76 (95.0%)	301 (91.2%)
Lower caseload	531 (73.6%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (60.0%)	80 (79.2%)	31 (64.6%)	20 (80.0%)	15 (57.7%)	48 (78.7%)	15 (88.2%)	17 (60.7%)	60 (75.9%)	240 (73.8%)
Fewer administrative requirements	583 (80.4%)	5 (83.3%)	4 (66.7%)	92 (90.2%)	37 (78.7%)	23 (92.0%)	22 (81.5%)	49 (80.3%)	15 (88.2%)	21 (72.4%)	62 (77.5%)	253 (77.8%)
Increased frequency or length of supervision	221 (30.6%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	40 (39.2%)	13 (27.1%)	9 (36.0%)	3 (11.5%)	24 (39.3%)	4 (23.5%)	8 (28.6%)	24 (30.8%)	95 (29.1%)
Higher quality supervision	300 (41.7%)	3 (50.0%)	2 (33.3%)	45 (44.1%)	17 (35.4%)	6 (24.0%)	4 (15.4%)	31 (50.8%)	3 (17.6%)	10 (37.0%)	33 (41.8%)	146 (45.2%)
Better communication about policy and practice changes	468 (64.9%)	4 (66.7%)	3 (50.0%)	72 (70.6%)	23 (48.9%)	14 (56.0%)	13 (48.1%)	42 (68.9%)	11 (64.7%)	16 (59.3%)	44 (55.7%)	226 (69.8%)
Additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes	453 (62.7%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	66 (64.7%)	24 (50.0%)	14 (56.0%)	10 (38.5%)	39 (63.9%)	11 (64.7%)	18 (64.3%)	43 (54.4%)	225 (69.2%)
Additional supports to help deal with STS	469 (64.9%)	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	75 (73.5%)	29 (60.4%)	14 (56.0%)	12 (48.0%)	42 (68.9%)	11 (64.7%)	15 (51.7%)	44 (55.7%)	221 (68.0%)
Additional professional and development opportunities	536 (73.8%)	4 (66.7%)	5 (83.3%)	82 (80.4%)	29 (60.4%)	15 (60.0%)	15 (55.6%)	43 (71.7%)	13 (76.5%)	22 (78.6%)	53 (67.1%)	242 (77.7%)

Child Welfare System Change

Communication about new practices and policies is key to implementing system changes. Generally, professionals reported being more satisfied with the communication provided by their agency (63%; Table 12) than communication provided by DHS (39%). Furthermore, though a majority (60%) of professionals believed they received the direction and support needed to successfully implement new practices and policies, a majority also felt that there is not enough time in their day-to-day work to implement those policies (71%). It is also essential to consider the timing of system changes. The majority of professionals noted that there was insufficient time between practice and policy changes (62%) and that the frequency of these changes negatively impacted their ability to serve children and families (57%). These perceptions were shared across all regions of the state.

Table 12.
Minnesota Child Welfare Workforce Perceptions of System Change

	Statewide	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
I am satisfied with the comm from the leadership at DHS about the new practices and policies	322 (39.4%)	8 (66.7%)	3 (50.0%)	38 (32.2%)	21 (36.9%)	13 (48.1%)	15 (51.7%)	37 (47.4%)	7 (31.8%)	9 (27.3%)	51 (50.5%)	120 (35.5%)
I am satisfied with the comm from the leadership at my agency about new practices and policies	510 (62.6%)	10 (83.3%)	6 (100.0%)	70 (59.3%)	38 (71.7%)	23 (85.2%)	23 (79.3%)	51 (66.2%)	19 (86.4%)	26 (78.8%)	73 (73.0%)	171 (50.6%)
My agency provides me with the direction and supports I need to successfully implement new practices and policies	487 (60.0%)	9 (75.0%)	6 (100.0%)	62 (53.4%)	43 (82.7%)	21 (77.8%)	20 (69.0%)	50 (64.1%)	16 (72.7%)	23 (69.7%)	68 (67.3%)	169 (50.3%)
I have enough time in my day-to-day work to implement new practices and policies	239 (29.3%)	6 (50.0%)	2 (33.3%)	21 (17.8%)	13 (24.5%)	8 (29.6%)	3 (10.3%)	24 (30.8%)	6 (27.3%)	12 (36.4%)	38 (38.0%)	106 (31.5%)
There is sufficient time between practice and policy changes at my agency for successful implementation	303 (37.3%)	5 (41.7%)	2 (10.0%)	36 (30.5%)	24 (46.2%)	7 (25.9%)	10 (34.5%)	31 (40.3%)	8 (36.4%)	16 (48.5%)	49 (49.0%)	115 (34.1%)
The frequency of practice and policy change within my agency negatively impacts my ability to serve children and families	459 (57.0%)	6 (50.0%)	2 (40.0%)	85 (73.3%)	20 (38.5%)	18 (66.7%)	17 (60.7%)	44 (57.9%)	13 (59.1%)	16 (48.5%)	44 (44.4%)	194 (57.9%)
The frequency of practice and policy change within my agency influences my desire to remain employed in child welfare	406 (50.2%)	6 (50.0%)	3 (60.0%)	61 (52.6%)	21 (40.4%)	17 (63.0%)	11 (39.3%)	41 (53.2%)	14 (63.6%)	12 (36.4%)	45 (45.5%)	175 (51.9%)

At the conclusion of the survey, participants were given an opportunity to clarify any of their responses or to provide additional feedback. Fourteen percent of professionals provided a response. The responses were compiled into 12 categories, as seen in Figure 9, with the most frequent categories discussed below.

Figure 9.
Additional Responses Provided by Professionals

Note. Compound or complex responses may have been coded into more than one category.
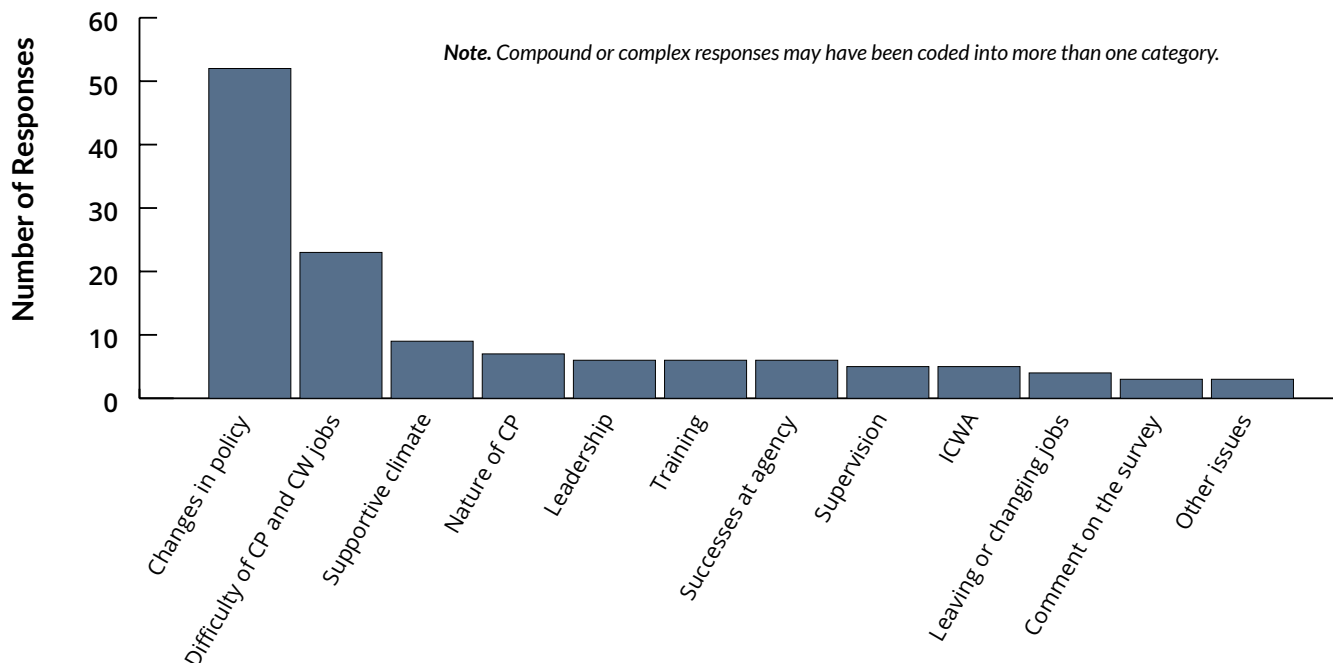
Changes in policy. Approximately half of the professionals who responded to this discussed dissatisfaction with implementation of policy changes by their agencies, by DHS, and by mandates resulting from the Governor's Task Force. For example, one worker noted the lack of resources to implement the changes brought about by the Task Force:

"There are NOT enough resources or time to implement the added duties required by the Task Force. I believe people at the top feel better knowing they are asking counties to do more and that they really believe that children are now safer, unfortunately because we do not have adequate time or staff in some cases kids are actually at greater risk today than they were before the Task Force mandates. Mandates need to come with adequate funding to implement....the county is doing the best it can with the limited resources it has."

Responses also frequently discussed the lack of child protection professionals' voice in policy making and the large disconnect between policymakers and workers actually in the field. For example, one worker commented:

"I would love to see more opportunities for social workers to be active participants in developing new policies and procedures at the state level. We have a lot of experience and ideas about how to improve our practice in ways that benefit our families, but it feels like lawmakers and even DHS don't consider us experts in our own field."

Difficulty of child protection work and child protection jobs. Approximately a fourth (23%) of professionals commented on the difficulty of child protection work. Professionals most frequently discussed the unmanageable size of caseloads, numerous expectations for each case, and concerns with personal safety. One worker commented on the difficulty of managing high caseloads due to a staff shortage:

"There is a sink or swim mentality, due to shortage of staff and high caseloads even if you are a talented and educated social worker that has all the skills and abilities to do the job you don't have enough time to do it effectively. When there are high caseloads social workers investigating neglect may end up being neglectful of the families they are working with due to lack of time to complete the assigned work. 'Good enough' should never be good enough when dealing with children and families."

Perceived level of support in work climate.
Approximately 10% of professionals commented on the level of support they felt existed for workers in their agency. Some workers commented positively on the amount of support they received, such as this worker:

> *"We have a supportive culture where we are allowed to cultivate ideas, practice outside of the box, and constantly learn. I have worked in an agency where this was not the case so feel very committed to seeing this continue in [my county]"*

Other professionals, such as the one below, commented on the lack of a supportive climate at their agency:

> *"This used to be the agency people wanted to work for. It has become that agency that people flee and that the public ridicule."*

Leadership. Six percent of professionals commented on improvements necessary in leadership in their agencies. Many discussed a lack of transparency and consistency in their communication with leaders. For example, one worker commented:

> *"I am very concerned about the lack of transparency within the agency. The way management seems to have no input into who they hire, changes made in agency or area without getting the final decision from upper management. No middle management or supervisor seems able to make a decision or hire staff without a decision from upper management which derails many progressive policies or actions."*

Other. Some comments included discussion about the nature of a job in child protection. For example, one worker noted, "I have wanted to work with children but would like to have a position where I could have more contact with them and less bureaucratic paperwork." Other comments regarded training, successes on the agency level, availability and effectiveness of training, supervision, ICWA policies, leaving or changing jobs, comments about the survey, and other issues.

Appendix B2
Quantitative Comparison Findings

Professionals of Color

The majority of child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency workers have historically identified as White. Though many agencies around the nation have taken steps to diversify the workforce, it still does not represent the population it serves. Abundant research has shown that there is an overrepresentation of American Indian and Black youth in the child protection system, and that these youth and their families face disparate outcomes as compared to White families.

According to data from the National Survey of Child Adolescent Well-being II, approximately 58% of child protection caseworkers identified themselves as non-Hispanic White; 24% identified as African American, 15% identified as Hispanic, and 4% identified as an other race and/or ethnicity (Dolan et al., 2011). 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 et al., 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. Abundant work suggests that child welfare agencies often struggle to both recruit and retain a diverse workforce (Griffiths et al., 2017; Jacquet, 2012). Furthermore, agencies that employ diverse staff still often fall short of having diverse representation in leadership positions (Lawrence et al., 2020).

It is essential to have a racially and ethnically diverse workforce for a variety of reasons. First, having workers that share or understand the culture or language of the families with whom they work may be more likely to understand and meet families' needs (Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2010). Furthermore, promoting racial and ethnic inclusion in the workforce, particularly in leadership positions, can allow for better identification of bias that exists in the system (Leung et al., 1994), and ultimately aid in the reduction of that bias (Lawrence et al., 2020). Additionally, research has shown that agencies that are able to recruit, promote, and retain a racially diverse workforce as well as create an inclusive environment have more satisfied, committed employees (Lawrence et al., 2020). Ultimately, having a more racially and ethnically diverse workforce results in a more stable workforce that is better at serving and protecting people from all cultures and communities.

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

Compared to White professionals, professionals of color were more likely to identify as male or another gender, having received Title IV-E training, hold a non-social work degree, and hold any graduate degree, specifically an MSW.

Job Satisfaction

A higher proportion of professionals of color reported that the general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem than White professionals. Professionals of color were also less likely than White professionals to report feeling afraid for their safety or for the safety of their families due to the nature of their work. Professionals of color were more likely to report that within their agencies, child protection staff did not cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies compared to their White peers. Lastly, professionals of color were less likely to note that their agencies advocated for the children and families with whom they work than White professionals.

Well-being

In comparison to White professionals, professionals of color were less likely to report experiencing secondary traumatic stress while carrying out their job duties, and were less likely to note that their jobs negatively impact their mental health.

Supervision

Professionals of color did not report any differences in supervision from White professionals.

Intent to Stay Next 12 Months

Professionals of color were more likely than their White peers to be seeking employment in a different agency or leaving their public/tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency work all together within the next 12 months.

Higher proportions of professionals of color indicated that additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes and additional professional and development opportunities would increase the likelihood of them staying in the child protection field compared to White professionals.

Child Welfare Systems Change

Compared to White professionals, professionals of color reported higher levels of satisfaction with the communication from the leadership at DHS about new practices and policies; they were also more likely to report they had time in their day-to-day work and sufficient time between practice and policy changes at their agency for successful implementation than White professionals.

Agency Role – Supervisors vs. Frontline Staff

Both frontline staff and supervisors play critical roles in the provision of services in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, and permanency. These roles, while distinct, are complementary in that they must work together for agencies to provide the best services possible. Perceptions of work and work environment can be influenced by the amount of decision-making power one holds over their work. The power differentials between supervisors and frontline staff may affect a variety of factors related to job satisfaction and well-being. Additionally, the requirements and expectations of each of these roles are distinct from one another, which may further affect experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the work and 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

Compared to frontline staff, a higher percentage of supervisors had a graduate degree in general (and an MSW in particular), were over the age of 36, and had seven or more years of tenure in the field.

Job Satisfaction

In comparison to front-line staff, supervisors were more likely to report they had sufficient input into decision making, that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies, and their agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce and for the children and families with whom they work. Importantly, supervisors were also less likely to indicate that they feared for their personal safety due to the nature of their work compared to front-line staff.

Well-being

Supervisors were more likely than frontline workers to report that their job negatively impacted their physical health.

Supervision

Supervisors and frontline workers did not report any differences in supervision.

Intent to Stay Next 12 Months

Supervisors, compared to frontline workers, were more likely to report having plans for retirement within the next 10 years. On the other hand, supervisors were less likely to report that they had searched for new employment outside of child protection but within their agency compared to front-line workers. Supervisors were also less likely than front-line workers to report an intention to leave public/tribal child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency work in the next 12 months. Additionally, a smaller percentage of supervisors suggested that different work hours and better benefits would increase the likelihood of them staying in their position compared to front-line workers.

Child Welfare Systems Change

Compared to front-line workers, supervisors reported greater satisfaction with communication about new practices and policies from leadership at DHS and from leadership at their agency.

Social Work Degree Attainment

Professionals take a variety of educational avenues that lead them to becoming a professional in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency. For example, some workers may attain degrees in social work, while others have a background in other related fields, such as psychology, sociology, public health, family studies, and child development. Child protection work is challenging, important, and deeply influential in the lives of the children and families who are involved. While different programs have some similarities, social work programs are designed to consider this reality, and curricula strive to be adaptive and responsive to the needs of workers and families. Because professionals may have different experiences and opinions based on their educational training, 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 or MSW were more likely to identify as female whereas professionals holding a degree outside of social work were more likely to identify as male or another gender. Non-social work degree holders were most likely to be aged 41 years or older, BSW holders were most likely to be aged 20-30 years, and MSW holders were most likely to be aged 31-40, 46-55, or 60 years. Compared to professionals holding a BSW or non-social degree, professionals with an MSW were more likely to be Title IV-E alumni, identify as a person of color, and be a supervisor.

Job Satisfaction

A higher proportion of professionals with a BSW, compared to professionals with an MSW or professionals with a degree outside of social work, reported that they had sufficient input into decision making in their agencies and that they could have a positive impact on the lives of their clients. However, professionals with a BSW were more likely to indicate that they were sometimes afraid for their personal safety and for the safety of their family members due to the nature of their work compared to other professionals. A higher percentage of workers with an MSW agreed that if explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to them, they would be better able to carry out their job duties and responsibilities compared to workers with a BSW or non-social work degree.

Well-being

Significant differences in well-being were not reported.

Supervision

Compared to professionals with a BSW or MSW, professionals with a degree outside of social work were more likely to agree that their supervisors are willing to help when problems arise.

Intent to Stay Next 12 Months

There were no differences in intent to stay in their professional positions by educational background.

In comparison to professionals with an MSW or a non-social work degree, professionals with a BSW were more likely to indicate that having fewer administrative requirements would increase the likelihood of staying in their current positions.

Child Welfare Systems Change

Professionals holding a BSW were more likely to report satisfaction about communication by leadership at their agencies about new practices and policies compared to professionals with an MSW or degree outside of social work.

Graduate Degree Attainment

Not only do professionals come from a variety of different educational backgrounds, but many professionals have graduate degrees. It is possible that professionals with advanced degrees, regardless of specific program, might hold different opinions about their experiences in the 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 a graduate degree were more likely to be an alumni of a Title IV-E educational

program, a professional of color, a supervisor, aged 31-35 or over 46, and have five or more years of tenure than professionals without this level of degree.

Job Satisfaction

Compared to professionals without a graduate degree, professionals with a graduate degree were more likely to report being satisfied with the location in which they primarily conducted their work and also more likely to be afraid for the safety of their family members due to the nature of their work. A smaller proportion of professionals with graduate degrees thought that they could have a positive impact on the lives of their clients, compared to professionals without a graduate degree. Furthermore, professionals with a graduate degree were more likely to report that frequent changes in policies had a negative impact on their job performance and that if explanations of policy decisions were made clearer, they would be better able to carry out job duties and responsibilities compared to professionals without a graduate degree.

In comparison to professionals without graduate degrees, professionals with graduate degrees were also less likely to report having sufficient input into decision making, believing professional development opportunities and activities are adequate/sufficient to enhance their abilities to do their jobs, perceiving that child welfare staff cooperatively participate with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies, and thinking that their agencies advocated for the children and families with whom they work. Lastly, professionals with graduate degrees were also less likely to agree that the general public holds employees of child welfare in high professional esteem compared to professionals without graduate degrees.

Well-being

Professionals with graduate degrees were less likely to report having the supports needed to manage their secondary traumatic stress.

Supervision

Professionals with graduate degrees were less likely to report having received adequate supervision and support from their immediate supervisor compared to professionals without graduate degrees.

Intent to Stay Next 12 Months

Professionals with graduate degrees were less likely to indicate an intent to remain in their current position for at least the next 12 months compared to professionals without graduate degrees. In comparison to professionals without graduate degrees, those with graduate degrees were more likely to report having plans to retire within the next ten years.

Compared to professionals without graduate degrees, professionals with graduate degrees were more likely to report that increased frequency, length, and quality of supervision; different work hours; better communication about policy and practice changes; and additional opportunities for involvement in policy and practice changes would increase the likelihood of staying in their current positions.

Child Welfare Systems Change

Professionals with a graduate degree were more likely to report that practice and policy change within their agency negatively impacted their ability to serve children and families. Furthermore, they were less likely to report that their agency provided them with sufficient direction, support, and time between practice and policy changes for successful implementation compared to professionals without graduate degrees. Lastly, professionals with graduate degrees were more likely to report dissatisfaction with the communication from the leadership at their agencies about new practices and policies.

The Role of Title IV-E Education and Training

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act offers funding for the recruitment and retention of child protection professionals trained to serve children in out-of-home care and their families. Currently, this program is implemented through BSW and MSW programs across Minnesota via administration of funding to support students' training and education. Throughout their programs, Title IV-E recipients have specific coursework and training they are required to complete. Upon graduation, they are obligated to search for, accept, and remain employed in a public or tribal child welfare agency in Minnesota for at least as long as they were supported as students.

Because of the training these professionals receive, they are uniquely positioned and equipped to serve children and their families who enter the child protection system. However, many child protection professionals do not enter the field through the Title IV-E program. To better understand the varying characteristics, experiences, and perceptions of professionals in the field, we compared professionals who had Title IV-E training with those who entered the workforce from other avenues using chi-square analyses. Significant findings are discussed below.

Demographic Characteristics

Professionals who participated in a Title IV-E educational program (i.e., received Title IV-E funding) were more likely to be professionals of color, hold a graduate degree, specifically a Master's of Social Work degree, and be under the age of 35 or over the age of 60, compared to professionals from other educational backgrounds.

Job Satisfaction

Title IV-E professionals were less likely than professionals from other educational backgrounds to disagree that they had the knowledge they needed to do their jobs effectively.

Well-being

A larger proportion of Title IV-E professionals reported experiencing secondary traumatic stress while carrying out their duties than did other professionals.

Supervision

Title IV-E professionals were more likely to report sharing work experiences with their supervisor to improve effectiveness of client services.

Intent to Stay Next 12 Months

There were no differences between Title IV-E professionals and professionals from other educational backgrounds in regard to their intent to stay in their current position for the next 12 months.

Title IV-E professionals were more likely to indicate that they intended to develop a long-term career in child protection, involuntary foster care, or adoption/permanency when they took their current position

compared to professionals from other educational backgrounds. Compared to professionals from other educational backgrounds, Title IV-E professionals were also more likely to report that higher quality supervision and better communication about policy and practice changes would increase the likelihood for them to stay in the field of child protection.

Child Welfare Systems Change

In comparison to professionals from other educational backgrounds, Title IV-E professionals were more likely to report being dissatisfied with communication from leadership at DHS and from their agencies about new practices and policies. Furthermore, they were less likely to indicate that their agencies provided them with the direction and supports needed to successfully implement new practices and policies, and less likely to report there has been sufficient time between practice and policy changes at their agencies for successful implementation as compared to professionals from other educational backgrounds.

Tenure Within the Field

Professionals' perceptions about their experiences in the workforce might also differ based on their tenure in the field. Professionals just entering the field may bring a fresh perspective, new training techniques, and insight from working in other related fields. On the other hand, professionals with long tenures may have witnessed and participated in many changes in the field over time and have experience working with a variety of different families and situations.

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, 3-8, and more than nine years of tenure using chi-square analysis. Significant findings are presented below.

Demographic Characteristics

Professionals' years of tenure tended to increase as their age increased. Specifically, workers with less than three years tenure were most likely to be under age 30, workers with between 3-8 years were most likely to be between 31-45 years old, and workers with nine or more years were most likely to be over age 50.

Job Satisfaction

Professionals new to the field (less than three years of tenure) were more likely to report that they did not have the knowledge needed to do their jobs effectively as compared to professionals with three or more years of tenure. Similarly, professionals with less than three years of experience in the field were more likely to report that frequent changes in policies negatively impacted their job than professionals with more experience. On the other hand, professionals with a moderate amount of experience (3-8 years) were least likely to report that professional development opportunities and activities provided by their agencies were sufficient to enhance their abilities to do their jobs, that child welfare staff cooperatively participated with supervisors and administrators in developing new programs and policies within their agency, and that their agency had advocated for the child welfare workforce.

Well-being

While secondary traumatic stress was widely reported by professionals, professionals with three or more years of experience were more likely to report experiencing secondary traumatic stress compared to professionals who worked less than three years. Furthermore, professionals newer to the field (less than three years of tenure) were less likely to report that their job negatively impacted their physical health compared to professionals with more years of experience. Lastly, professionals with fewer than nine years of experience were more likely to report using unhealthy behaviors to cope with stress about their jobs than professionals with more than nine years of experience.

Supervision

Compared to professionals with more years of experience, professionals with less than three years of experience were more likely to report that their

supervisors are willing to help when problems arise. Similarly, these newer professionals were more likely to report that they can talk about difficult things with their supervisors than professionals with more years of experience in the field.

Intent to Stay Next 12 Months

Professionals with more than nine years of tenure were more likely to have plans to retire in the next 10 years than professionals with less years of tenure.

Newer professionals in the field (less than three years of experience) were more likely to report that an increase in frequency or length of supervision would increase their likelihood of staying employed in child protection in the next 12 months compared to professionals with three or more years of experience. Additionally, professionals with less than three years of tenure were more likely to report that additional professional development opportunities would increase the likelihood of staying employed in child protection in the next 12 months, while professionals with nine or more years of tenure were more likely to report that it would not increase that likelihood.

Child Welfare Systems Change

Overall, professionals with 3-8 years of tenure were more likely to report challenges about child welfare systems change compared to other groups. They were more dissatisfied with the communication from leadership at their agencies about practices and policies, less likely to report that their agencies provided direction and supports needed to successfully implement new practices and policies, felt that they lacked time in their day-to-day work to implement new practices and policies, and were more likely to report that the frequency of practice and policy changes with their agencies negatively impacted their ability to serve children and families compared to other professionals.

Appendix B3
2016–2019 WSS Comparison

The 2019 Workforce Stabilization Study (WSS) was conducted as a follow-up to the original study in 2016. The 2016 WSS was created following drastic policy changes to gauge initial responses by professionals, including the flow of workers into and out of the child protection field following those changes. The 2019 survey was administered to learn about the experiences and opinions of professionals after they had a chance to become more adjusted to the policy changes.

The 2019 WSS survey utilized the same basic structure as the 2016 survey. However, there were some differences between the 2016 and 2019 versions of the surveys. Specifically, the 2019 survey included additional questions related to job satisfaction, supervision, and child welfare system changes. Additionally, the well-being section was a new addition, included to provide a more thorough depiction of workforce experiences of secondary traumatic stress. To examine changes in the workforce over time, responses were compared between the 2016 and 2019 surveys for all repeated questions. Only significant findings are presented below.

Demographics

Since 2016, there has been an increase in professionals who were supervisors (7.50% increase), received Title IV-E funding (4% increase), have 3-4 (7.9% increase) and 7-8 (1.10% increase) years of tenure in child protection, involuntary foster care, adoption, or permanency, and have been in their current positions for 1-2 (5.2% increase) and 3-4 (12.5% increase) years. On the other hand, over the past three years there has been a decrease in professionals who are over 60 (3.2% decrease), hold a BSW (18% decrease) and MSW (9.4% decrease), have less than one year (7.5% decrease) or 9-10 years (2.6% decrease) of tenure, and have less than one year (10% decrease), 9-10 years (3% decrease), 13-15 years (2.1% decrease), and more than 15 years (3.7% decrease) longevity in their current positions.

Job Satisfaction

A larger percentage of professionals reported being satisfied with their jobs (11.5% increase), having sufficient input into decision making at their agencies (5.0% increase), and believing that the public holds child welfare employees in high professional esteem (4.8% increase) in 2019 compared to 2016. Additionally, since 2016 there has been an increase in professionals who feel that their agency has advocated for the child welfare workforce (7.3% increase) and for the children and families with whom they work (13.7% increase). With increases in job satisfaction come concurrent decreases in dissatisfaction. In 2019, fewer professionals reported feeling overwhelmed with their job duties (9.8% decrease), and fewer noted that frequent changes in policies had a negative impact on their job performance (9.7% decrease). Unfortunately, however, more professionals reported that they would be able to carry out their jobs and responsibilities better if explanations of policy decisions were made clearer to them (9.3% increase) in 2019 than 2016.

Well-being

In comparison to 2016, a larger proportion of professionals in 2019 reported fearing for their personal safety (28.4% increase) and the safety of their family members (5.4% increase) due to the nature of their work. Furthermore, since 2016, there was an increase in professionals who had experienced secondary traumatic stress while carrying out their job duties (4.8% increase), though fortunately, more professionals also reported that they had the supports they needed to manage that secondary traumatic stress (7.2% increase).

Supervision

There were no significant differences in supervision between the 2016 and 2019 surveys.

Retirement and Career Plans

Between 2016 and 2019, there was a decrease in the proportion of professionals planning to retire within 4 years (1.7% decrease) and an increase in the percentage of professionals planning to retire in more than 11 years (7.9% increase).

Intent to Stay in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, Adoption, or Permanency - Past 12 months

In 2019, more professionals reported not looking for a job ("stayers") in the past 12 months (6.7% increase) and fewer professionals reported that they had applied or interviewed for another position in the child protection field in ("movers") in the past 12 months (6.7% decrease) compared to professionals in 2016.

Intent to Stay in Child Protection, Involuntary Foster Care, Adoption, or Permanency - Next 12 months

Similarly, more professionals reported that they were not planning to look for a job ("stayers") in the next 12 months and fewer indicated that they planned to switch to another position in the child protection field ("movers") in the next 12 months in 2019 compared to 2016.

In 2019, more professionals reported that an increased salary would increase the likelihood of them staying in their current positions (3.2% increase) while fewer professionals reported that lower caseloads would increase the likelihood of them staying in their current positions (7.8% decrease).

Child Welfare Systems Change

There was an increase of professionals who reported satisfaction with the communication from leadership at DHS about new practice and policies in 2019 compared to 2016 (4.9% increase).

Appendix C
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