

**STAFF TURNOVER AND RETENTION (STAR) WORKGROUP**  
**March 5, 2008**

**Introductions**

**Attendees:** Lynn Farris, Marcia Daniel, Valerie Harvey, Sam Pourciau, Nelda Rains, Charlotte Frilot, Connie Wagner, Kaaren Hebert, Nannette Russell White, Shelly Johnson, Donna Hatch, Rose Hatch, Brent Villemarette, Lisa Welch, Melissa Maiello

**Absent:** Hannah Dunn, Diane Senn, Gail Lewis, Marty Gibson

**Conducting:** Shewayn Watson, Bridget Clark

**Review/approval of minutes:**

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as is.

**Overview of management team meeting.**

Bridget: Have support of management team as we move forward with this issue. Decision in meeting with feds is to develop a technical assistance matrix regarding our priorities. Workforce development is our number one priority and we are asking for assistance from our federal partners and the National Resource Centers. Second priority is the implementation of a practice model. Our federal partners will be here next month to help us work out a plan to develop this. Division directors, section administrators, LIFTS initiatives leads and planning section will be included in this meeting. Others are welcome to join.

**Sub-committee reports:**

**Training:**

Sam, as well as other members of the STAR committee, had previously contacted several universities to assess their practice models. Marty has done a tremendous amount of leg work and has a lot of information. Also, Marty shared that Ann Williamson has contracted with a consultant from Kentucky and is looking at their training program. This program encompasses a lot of classroom training as well as integrating pieces from the field. In discussion with Marty, appears that they are pretty far along in the process regarding the Kentucky model.

Brent - Consortium of universities. Smaller university is the lead. Use IV-E money and state general funds and draw down money from HHS (which we have never used). A lot of the staff at the university in Kentucky are retired and have had child welfare experience. Marty has data that training program has increased retention and outcomes for children. Looking at doubling training time for new workers, but they will be better trained. Child Welfare League of America or Children's Bureau has child welfare turnover broken down by state.

Bridget - Will need to have a commitment that new workers will not be assigned cases until training is completed. Marty recommends that this be brought up at regional administrator meeting next week.

Nelda - believes that this is important and there is a need for more intense and longer training. The curriculum will have to contain something that will keep them busy while they are in the office. Worker is usually unhappy when they do not have a case and they are bored.

Valerie - Believes that the worker may have one case in order to use this as a learning case to transfer skills into practice.

Sam - New York did an in-depth study on the cost of turnover. (Handout provided). The cost of losing a worker far supersedes the cost of training or a mentor.

Kaaren - Is there data regarding turnover broken down by state? Would like to look at states with low turnover and assess their practice model to see what works and what would best fit with Louisiana. How strong is the link between universities and the child welfare curriculum?

Valerie - Need to strengthen and collaborate the curriculum that supports the work that we are doing with the universities. Marty has a wealth of information that she has gathered. Do not feel that there is any other information that this sub-committee can gather.

Brent - Committed to developing a child welfare training institute. However, there is a funding issue. Completed a budget request which contained pieces of funding a training institute, however this was not funded. Mark Washington stated that this model was built into pieces and added on to in increments.

Kaaren - At the point of looking at the different models that are available. Considering whether major university has to be LSU or does LSU monitor this and is divided amongst smaller universities. A lot of decisions still need to be made. Do not feel that there are any other activities that training group needs to be focusing on at this time. Focusing on the Kentucky training curriculum. However this model focuses on new staff, so what do we do with current employees and on-going training? Sub-committee can look at how to support current employees.

Brent- Need to collect data regarding the training that we are providing now. How much are we spending? What is practical? Look at regional level and see what their needs are and what can meet their training needs?

Nelda-Very impressive to have nationally renowned persons to provide training to front line workers.

Kaaren- Look at CFSSR and see what our biggest issues are and get nationally know experts to provide training in this area.

Discussion:

Possibly the NRC's can guide us to some of the experts that provide training. Training has to be data driven and responsive to the needs of the regions. Need to evaluate what effect the training is having and is it improving outcomes.

**Next Steps:** Obtain CFSSR data, prioritize rank in issues (identify lowest five performing areas), provide report to RA's/Management team in advance of meeting with the NRC's and obtain training report from regional training coordinators.

Have Marty discuss in meeting with Butler Institute, how to keep workers busy between training and case assignment.

### **Support/Guidance/Communication Sub-Committee**

Focused on supporting staff through communication efforts. Want to be able to let staff know what we are doing at this level and the urgency of this issue. Discussed different approaches to communication. Letting people know about the initiatives and the importance of this. Can not have excellent practice without excellent people here to do the work. Approach is communication at this point.

1. Senior management team will be advised of what the focus is of this work group and keeping them involved of what our recommendations are through verbal and written reports.

Bridget requested that Connie Wagner report this information back to the management team. Connie would like to coordinate this with Bridget during her report to the RA's next Wednesday.

2. Keep regional administrators informed of discussions and recommendations that are coming from this group.
3. OCS Staff- Want to link the message to staff that their needs are important and link this to the LIFTS newsletter. Believe that Marketa should address the importance of turnover of staff through a stand alone email prior to LIFTS newsletter and address this issue in the newsletter. In addition to the initiatives, staff's needs are vital. Highlight a region in the newsletter regarding positive work and best practices. Additionally, Bridget will get the STAR workgroups minutes and work products on the DSS website under CQI reports.

Discussed setting up specific email for regions to tell us what they are doing. Discussion that this could become overwhelming. Discussion that RA's could provide the information.

4. State Office staff- develop an "interdivisional sharing of information" process. If we are not aware of what each of the divisions are doing at this level, this filters down to the field and they left trying to juggle everything. Looking at ways to make sure we are all aware of what everyone is doing. Discussed having everyone coming to a meeting on a specific date, time and location and reporting on what they are doing. Will be difficult to have everyone come at the same time and the same place. Discussed this including division directors and section administrators. Belief that program managers are vital to this meeting as well. Believe meeting can be held on 9<sup>th</sup> floor. Problem area would be the agenda. Each division would be reporting on what they are doing and provide highlights. Discussed holding these meetings on Friday. Will need to determine how many people are on flex-time and off on Friday.

Nelda- Believes that this would be very valuable to the field. There are people in the field who talk to State office personnel and they have to provide information to people who work here because they are unaware of things that the field knows and state office persons do not and there are comments made about this.

**Next Steps:** Kaaren and Connie to bring this suggestion of everyone meeting up to the management team next week. Discussed placing the minutes on-line. Bringing up the newsletter at the RA meeting and adding updates to the newsletter. Put STAR workgroup minutes/notes on the website.

Brent- discussed with Marketa and Nanette that there needs to be periodic updates with staff regarding the progress of this workgroup. Marketa open to doing this.

Nanette- Marketa does not want to do this on a scheduled basis and wants to send random updates.

### **Workload/caseload:**

Discussed Joe Bruno talking to Joy regarding clerical staff and how they can be more utilized. Joe to have foster care section to look at Foster Care manual requirements to see what can be cut out and what they are doing that is not mandatory. Discussed caseloads and the fact that even with a caseload of ten it is almost impossible to complete all of the requirements mandated by policy. Not physically possible to meet all policy requirements. Diane to talk to supervisors at supervisor's meeting to obtain possible suggestions to assist foster care workers for an "immediate" fix. Needs to be a study of policy and a case load study to see what is going on. Diane also going to ask supervisors to look at YAP cases to see which ones can be closed. (State wide review just completed). Get word out to workers that there is work being done to help them. Workers need to be given concise information regarding what is being done and not just that "we are working on it".

Discussed RMS'. One of the biggest documented efforts is transporting clients

**Next Steps:** Need feedback on the use of clerical from HR. Need an idea on using clerical staff. Obtain information from NRC's regarding work process/mapping. Foster care will be assessed first. State wide case review already looked at YAP cases that should not be open.

**Pay Sub-committee:**

Discussed levels in child welfare position. Level A and level B, one being a quasi-supervisory role and mentoring role. This was brought before Civil Service and was not approved. The premise is that it falls in a dual career ladder path (Civil Service Rule 5.9). It has to be in a scientific, engineering, medical or IT field and we do not fit in this dual career path.

**On-call pay-** based on amount that DSS IT gets when they are on intake. This decision was made by DSS based on the Enterprise approach.

**Plan to increase number of specialist 3 positions-** Included in packet is a meeting agenda which looks at where we stand in the number of 1 and 2's vs. the number of 3 positions. Looked at bringing the number of 3's up to 30 percent and then to 40 percent. However, issues with not enough qualified people to fill 3 positions. Handout contains where we are by region with the number of 3 positions. Through time, the regions have less 3 positions because of lack of qualified staff. Want to look at this again when regions are back at full capacity with qualified staff.

**Pay and Performance-** evaluations being specifically based on performance. Looked at civil service regulations based on performance. Circular provided that states rules will not be changed at this time, however an alternate form can be used. Agency decided not to adopt this form. Discussed how we can best use our current evaluation process. Would like to begin trainings again regarding the use of the PPR and withholding merit increases.

Need for some changes in the evaluation process. Would like to make it more objective, i.e. how many cases did you close, how many visits were done on time. Need some more guidelines regarding planning and rating PPR's, however there are so many extraneous issues that can impact objective ratings. Will discuss this further.

**Hazard pay/premium pay:** Last proposal was on CPI which equals about \$200/month per employee for a total of \$250,000 annually. Needs to be all programs and frontline workers. Want to get more data and see what area had highest level of turnover. If possible, to provide hazard pay, would begin with programs that have the highest level of turnover and then increment other programs from there.

Discussion: problems of incrementally inputting this, what program is more dangerous than the other, people working cases in all programs and transferring cases to other parishes. Discussed measuring threats, injuries, danger, etc.

Chart of licensed employees-Originally submitted through CQI. No money available to pay licensing fees. Discussed implementing this in phases based on specialist position. Phase 1 being Spec. 1-3. Brought up through management meeting. Discussed lack of funding because of 9 million dollar deficit. There was no discussion of this impacting turnover.

Rewards and recognitions- Discussed a \$1000 one time reward. Discussed breaking this down into Plan A, and giving increments of reward during certain time frames. Question as to whether this can be paid out of salary dollars. Due to SER, we are currently exceeding current salary dollars.

**Next steps-** Rewrite memo linking payment of licensing fees to turnover and retention, table hazard pay issue, table rewards and recognition, HR look at process of PPR's-break out into separate work group to look out more objectives issues and relating to CFSR outcomes, look at CPTP training regarding performance evaluations for new supervisors, long-term: look at Spec. 3 increase to 30%.

**Next Meeting agenda items:** Discuss how often we need to meet, time frames for meeting, staff turnover statistics by program area (Shelly Johnson).

Next meeting: April 23, 2008 at 9:00am.