

THE CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE CHALLENGE:

Results from a Preliminary Study

Presented at Finding Better Ways 2001
Dallas, Texas

May 2001

Study conducted in collaboration among the Alliance for Children and Families (Alliance), American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

Table of Contents

Sections

- [Overview](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Sample](#)
- [Definitions of Terms](#)
- [Additional Analyses and Classifications](#)
- [Results](#)
- [Contact Information](#)

Tables and Charts

1. [Annual Operating Budget](#)
2. [Average Number of Authorized FTE Positions](#)
3. [Average Vacancy Rates](#)
4. [Average Annual Staff Turnover Rates](#)
5. [Average Annual Salaries](#)
6. [Salaries for Direct Service Caseworkers in Private Agencies](#)
7. [Average Caseload per Worker](#)
8. [Notable Recruitment and Hiring Problems: State Agencies](#)
9. [Notable Retention Problems: State Agencies](#)
10. [Most Problematic County Recruitment Issues](#)
11. [Most Problematic County Retention Issues](#)
12. [Notable Recruitment and Hiring Problems: Private Agencies](#)
13. [Notable Retention Problems: Private Agencies](#)
14. [Highly Problematic Recruitment and Retention Issues: Private Agencies with High vs. Low Turnover](#)
15. [Frequently Implemented Recruitment Strategies: State Agencies](#)
16. [Frequently Implemented Retention Strategies: State Agencies](#)
17. [Most Effective County Recruitment Strategies](#)
18. [Most Effective County Retention Strategies](#)

19. [Frequently Implemented Recruitment Strategies: Private Agencies](#)
 20. [Frequently Implemented Retention Strategies: Private Agencies](#)
 21. [Most Important Actions and Initiatives: Private Agencies \(CWLA members\)](#)
 22. [Most Important Actions and Initiatives: State and County Agencies](#)
-

Overview

In the fall of 2000, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and the Alliance for Children and Families (Alliance) formed a partnership in order to accomplish the following goals:

- Gather data about the scope and nature of the workforce challenge among public and private, non-profit agencies serving children and families
- Gather data about effective practices in recruiting and retaining a quality child welfare workforce
- Prepare findings and recommendations to be shared with the new Administration and Congress in 2001
- Lay the groundwork for future studies of the child welfare workforce

The present study is preliminary by all accounts. The results are final, but the questions were only a first attempt at delineating staffing problems and strategies. It is our intention to continue to investigate the workforce challenge and follow-up the present research with additional studies. For example, CWLA hopes to expand the scope and depth of future surveys by gathering data on all staff and from varying staff perspectives. CWLA is committed to learning about and facilitating improvements in the child welfare workforce.

Methodology

APHSA surveyed public child welfare agencies, including state and county agencies. The data herein predominantly reflect responses from state agencies. Selective findings from the county data are included in the presentation. See below for a description of the county sample.

The Alliance and CWLA surveyed private, non-profit agencies. The data from these two sources were combined for subsequent analyses and constitute "Private Agency" responses.

Each survey was sent to the executive director or a similar supervisor; however, there is no assurance that a director completed the survey. For example, a staff member from human resources may have answered the questionnaire because some questions referred to vacancies and turnover. In many cases, more than one person was involved in completing the questionnaire due to the wide variety of questions asked.

Sample

Public Agencies: States

A total of 43 states (84%) completed the survey. Thirty-five of the 43 states responding use a state-administered child welfare system, and eight are locally administered. Two additional locally administered states provided a sample of counties in lieu of responding themselves.

Public Agencies: Counties

In addition to surveying state agencies, APHSA surveyed local public agencies. The questionnaire was sent to agency administrators who serve on the Board and Executive Committee of the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA). Eleven of 15 surveys were returned for a response rate of 73%.

In the course of reviewing the survey, two locally administered states decided to ask a sample of their counties to respond rather than respond themselves. North Carolina sampled three counties from each of its three local size categories and three surveys were returned (33%). Minnesota sampled 22 of its counties and 21 surveys were returned (95%).

California, a locally administered state, completed and submitted a survey, but felt that it would be important also to get data from its counties. The state sent the questionnaire to its 58 counties, and a total of 18 counties (including several in the NAPCWA sample) responded (31%).

The total number of county responses to the survey was 48. Although the responses from Minnesota and North Carolina used representative samples, **the data for the county sample, as a whole, cannot be considered generally representative of counties across the country.**

Private Agencies

Alliance: Only service-providing members with a child welfare focus were selected to receive the survey. Of these 96 member agencies, 29 completed surveys for a response rate of 30%.

CWLA: Private agencies that are members of the Alliance and CWLA were removed from the sampling pool, as were all public agencies. From a pool of 551 agencies, a random sample of 314 agencies received the survey. Of those, 122 completed the questionnaire for a response rate of 39%.

Of the private agencies in the study:

- 69% are fully accredited,
- 96% contract with public agencies,
- 7% are located in the New England region*,
- 24% in the Mid-Atlantic region*,
- 24% in the Southern region*,
- 25% in the Mid-Western region*, and
- 20% in the Western region*.

* The regions reflect CWLA membership regions:

New England (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)

Mid-Atlantic (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)

Southern (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV)

Mid-West (IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, WI)

Western (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, ND, NV, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY)

Definitions of Terms

Child Protective Service (CPS) Workers: workers that provide services to families in which the child has been identified as a victim of or at risk of abuse or neglect.

Core CPS services include:

- Report taking
- Safety assessment
- Investigation
- Risk assessment
- Family assessment
- Case service planning and implementation

Note. If agencies were unable to provide separate information on CPS workers, they were asked to include data on those workers with data on "Other Direct Service Caseworkers."

Other Direct Service Caseworkers: all agency professional staff persons who carry cases and provide services directly to children and/or families. This includes case managers but **does not include paraprofessional staff**, such as child and youth workers.

Examples of service areas include:

- Family support
- Out-of-home care
- Foster care and adoption
- Family therapy
- Individual and group counseling

Supervisors: assigned agency staff persons who provide formal direction for and oversight of the performance of direct service workers.

Vacancy Rate: percentage calculated as the number of vacant positions on September 1, 2000 relative to the number of authorized FTE positions on September 1, 2000.

Annual Turnover Rate: percentage calculated as the number of staff who left the agency for any reason from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 relative to the number of authorized FTE positions on September 1, 2000.

Note. Turnover Rates only reflect the number of staff who left the agency, not the number of staff who left their positions and stayed within the agency (e.g., staff who were promoted).

Note. Turnover Rates will always be higher than Vacancy Rates because the former involves individuals and positions and the latter only involves positions. More than one individual can occupy one position in the course of one year.

Note. Questions about Turnover and Vacancy were not parallel. The reference dates were slightly different.

Additional Analyses and Classifications

In addition to the summary analyses on the state and private agencies, analyses of the private agency data were conducted to compare two groups, those with low caseworker turnover and those with high caseworker turnover. These comparisons were made in an initial attempt to answer the following:

- Are there differences in the problems faced by agencies that have low turnover and agencies that have high turnover?
- Are there differences in the recruitment and retention strategies utilized by agencies that have low turnover and agencies that have high turnover?
- Are there administrative differences between agencies that have low turnover and agencies that have high turnover?

Low Turnover: refers to agencies with 20% or less annual turnover among direct service caseworkers, not including paraprofessional staff.

- 22 agencies reported annual turnover rates between 1% and 20%
- 14 agencies reported annual turnover rates of 0%

High Turnover: refers to agencies with 50% or greater annual turnover among direct service caseworkers, not including paraprofessional staff.

- 17 agencies reported annual turnover rates between 50% and 99%
- 6 agencies reported annual turnover rates between 100% and 600%

Some of the results of these ancillary analyses are presented in the current summary. They help support this preliminary portrayal of the workforce challenge.

Results

In some instances, data on state and private agencies are presented side-by-side. These displays inherently generate statements of comparison; however, side-by-side data from public and private agencies speak to similarities in pattern and scope more so than dramatic differences. Our intention is to portray the big picture not to make statistical distinctions.

Although their fundamental missions of serving children and families are comparable, state agencies and private, non-profit agencies cannot and should not be contrasted in terms of operating procedures and staffing issues. State and private agencies face different financial constraints, federal regulations, and personnel guidelines in addition to differences in the variety of services provided and geographical area of services.

As displayed in the subsequent tables, state and private agencies from the study differ in size as well. They widely vary in their annual operating budgets and numbers of staff.

- On average, annual state budgets are \$285 million compared to \$13 million for private agencies.
- In fact, only 10% of the private agencies in the study had operating budgets greater than \$30 million.
- On average, state agencies employ ten times the number of staff that private agencies employ.

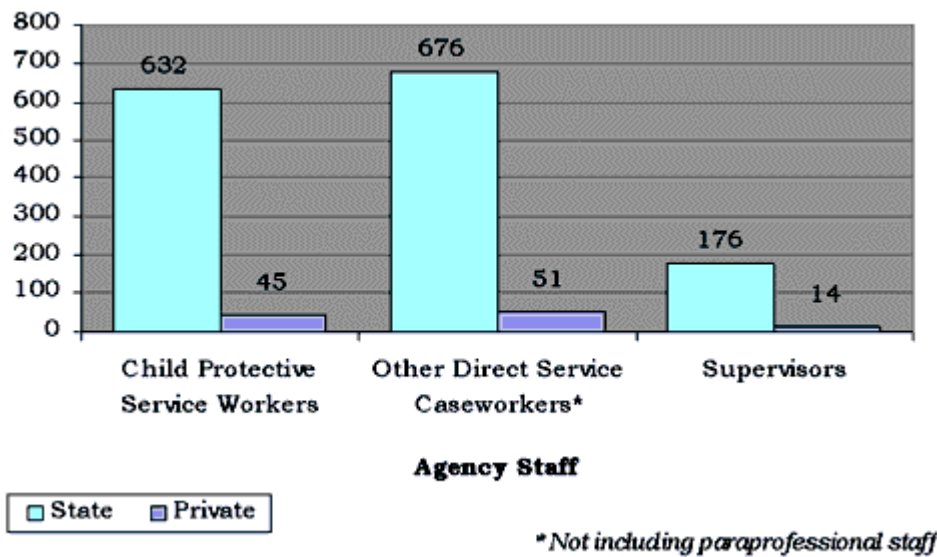
However, both state and private agencies are experiencing the workforce challenge. They confront similar recruitment and retention problems and attempt similar strategies to improve recruitment and retention. The information in the current report roughly sketches the workforce issues that challenge state and private agencies serving children and families.

Annual Operating Budget

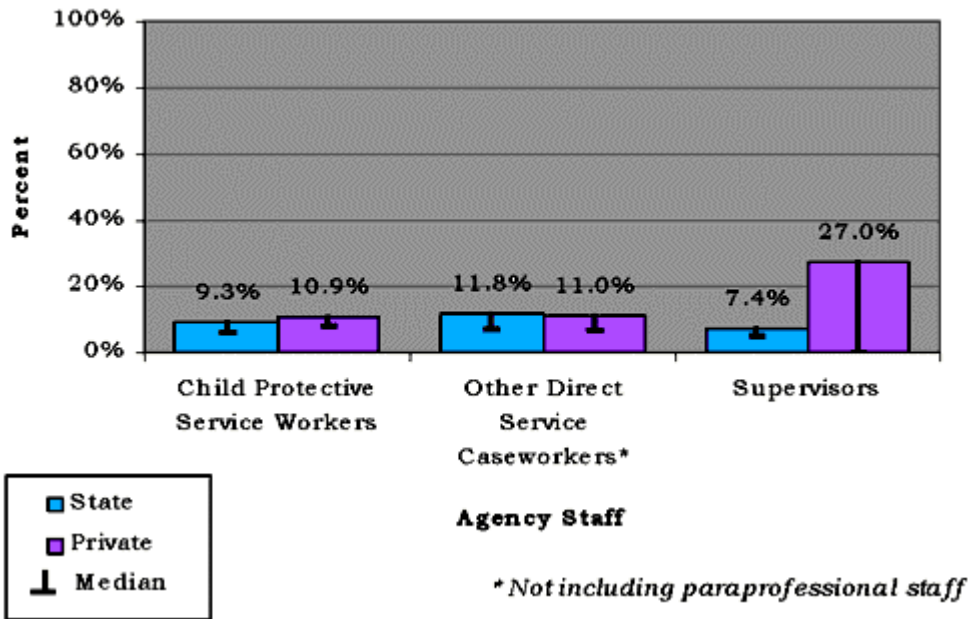
	Minimum	Average	Maximum
STATE <i>(n=27)</i>	\$4.5 million	\$285 million	\$1.3 billion
PRIVATE <i>(n=113)</i>	\$100,000	\$13 million	\$141.8 million

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Average Number of Authorized FTE Positions on September 1, 2000



Average Vacancy Rates



(Number of vacant positions on September 1, 2000 divided by the number of authorized FTE positions on September 1, 2000)

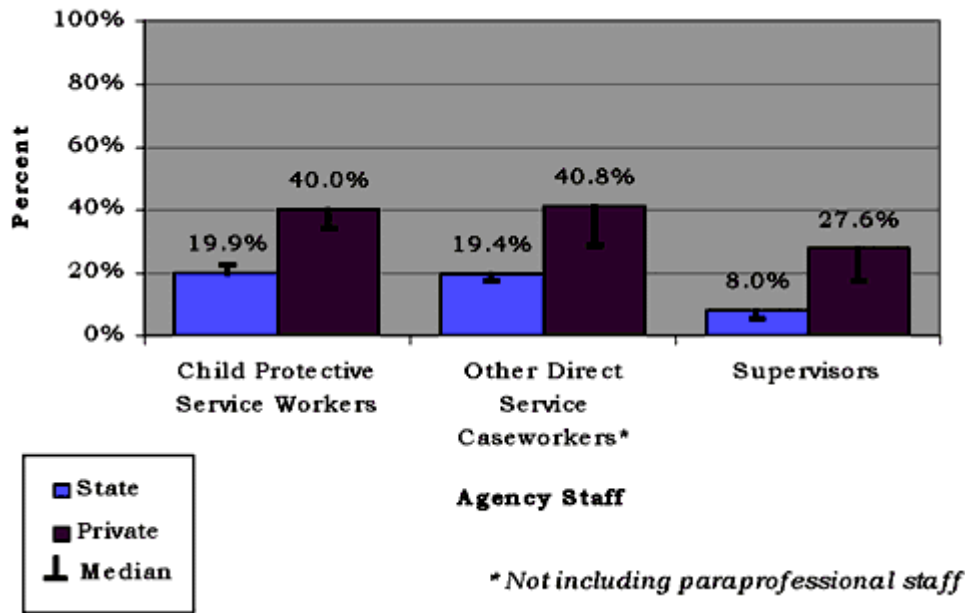
Response Profile for Vacancy Rates:

- *CPS Workers*- 25 state agencies & 25 private agencies
- *Other Direct Service Caseworkers*- 25 state agencies & 120 private agencies
- *Supervisors*- 29 state agencies & 121 private agencies

Notes on Vacancy Rates:

1. Overall, the average vacancy rate for CPS and other direct service caseworkers was 10% among state and private agencies.
2. The average vacancy rate of supervisors in the state agencies was lower than that of workers in state agencies.
3. The average vacancy rate for supervisors in private agencies (27%) is considerably different than the median, or the 50th percentile, vacancy rate for supervisors (0%). This suggests that many private agencies in the sample have low vacancy rates, and a few private agencies have notably high vacancy rates, which skew the average rate.
4. On average, state and private agencies reported that 5 to 7 weeks were required to fill a vacant position from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000.

Average Annual Staff Turnover Rates



(Number of staff who left the agency from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 divided by the number of authorized FTE positions on September 1, 2000)

Response Profile for Annual Staff Turnover Rates:

- *CPS Workers*- 19 state agencies & 23 private agencies
- *Other Direct Service Caseworkers*- 20 state agencies & 117 private agencies
- *Supervisors*- 21 state agencies & 104 private agencies

Notes on Annual Staff Turnover Rates:

1. State agencies reported that, on average, 20% of the workers and 8% of the supervisors left the agency during the course of one year.
2. Private agencies noted high average turnover rates: 40% for workers and 28% for supervisors. However, the median annual turnover rates were lower (34% for CPS workers, 29% for other caseworkers, and 18% for supervisors). The average rates appeared to be slightly inflated by a few private agencies with extremely high annual turnover.
3. State agencies reported long periods of tenure for their staff.
 - The average tenure for CPS workers in 12 state agencies was 7 years.
 - The average tenure for other direct service caseworkers in 17 state agencies was 8 years.
 - The average tenure for supervisors in 17 state agencies was 13 years.

1. Private agencies reported moderate periods of tenure for incumbents.
 - The average tenure for CPS workers in 22 private agencies was 3 years.
 - The average tenure for other direct service caseworkers in 109 private agencies was 4 years.
 - The average tenure for supervisors in 101 private agencies was 6 years.

Average Annual Salaries

	Child Protective Service (CPS) Workers	Other Direct Service Caseworkers*	Supervisors
STATE	\$33,436 <i>(n=22)</i>	\$32,861 <i>(n=24)</i>	\$41,939 <i>(n=28)</i>
PRIVATE	\$28,646 <i>(n=26)</i>	\$29,200 <i>(n=125)</i>	\$39,615 <i>(n=118)</i>

* Not including paraprofessional staff such as child and youth workers

Notes on Annual Salaries:

1. The salary figures reflect responses as to the "average" paid within the agency, not the starting salary and not adjusted for years of tenure, etc.
2. The salaries for direct service caseworkers do not include information on child and youth workers or any other type of paraprofessional staff.
3. Although the average salary for each type of staff member in state agencies appears higher than that in private agencies, this distinction may or may not reflect an actual disparity in salaries in all locales.
4. State and private agency differences are not as meaningful as the differences between private agencies that report low staff turnover and agencies that report high staff turnover for direct service caseworkers.

Salaries for Direct Service Caseworkers* in Private Agencies

	Minimum Salary	Average Salary	Maximum Salary
Low Turnover	\$24,637 ^a <i>(n=33)</i>	\$31,191 ^b <i>(n=34)</i>	\$42,239 ^c <i>(n=30)</i>
High Turnover	\$22,387 ^a <i>(n=21)</i>	\$27,689 ^b <i>(n=18)</i>	\$36,395 ^c <i>(n=21)</i>

^a Not significantly different (t(52)=1.28, p=0.21)

^b Not significantly different (t(50)=1.42, p=0.16)

^c Not significantly different (t(49)=1.52, p=0.14)

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

* Not including paraprofessional staff such as child and youth workers

Notes on Salaries in Private Agencies (High vs. Low Turnover):

1. Although not statistically significant, the gap between the salaries in the agencies with low turnover and with high turnover is noteworthy and could easily affect staff migration.
2. In fact, 38% of the high turnover agencies perceive starting salaries as highly problematic for staff recruitment versus only 9% of low turnover agencies.
3. In terms of retaining staff, 68% of the high turnover agencies believe that low salaries are highly problematic compared to 38% of the low turnover agencies.
4. Agencies with low staff turnover (i.e., less than 20% annually) have comparable minimum salaries to agencies with high turnover (i.e., greater than 50% annually), but the gap progressively widens for average and maximum salaries.
5. As an aside, survey results show private agencies with low turnover have an average operating budget of \$18.5 million compared to \$12 million for high turnover agencies. Yet, on average the low turnover agencies have fewer direct service caseworkers (44) than high turnover agencies (68), and average supervisor to worker ratios are identical (1 to 4).

Average Caseload per Worker

		Child Protective Service (CPS) Workers	Other Direct Service Caseworkers*
<i>Child</i> is defined as case	STATE	24 <i>(n=19)</i>	31 <i>(n=21)</i>
	PRIVATE	13 <i>(n=21)</i>	14 <i>(n=115)</i>
<i>Family</i> is defined as case	STATE	17 <i>(n=25)</i>	20 <i>(n=17)</i>
	PRIVATE	13 <i>(n=21)</i>	11 <i>(n=84)</i>

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

* Not including paraprofessional staff such as child and youth workers.

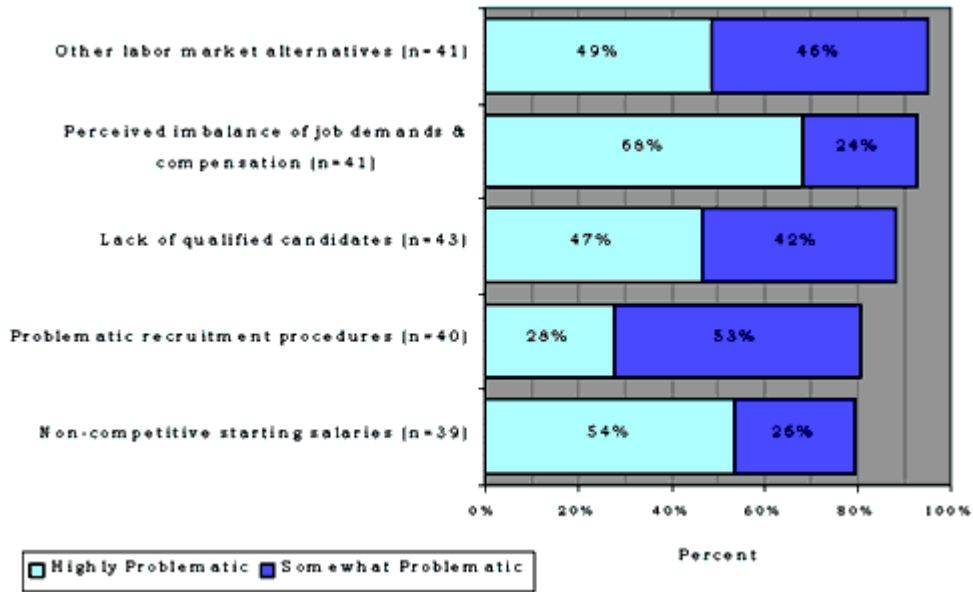
Notes on Caseload per Worker:

1. Although there may be differences between state and private agencies' definitions of child and family cases, caseload per worker is an important factor in staff retention.
2. State agencies are carrying higher caseloads on average, and a large proportion of states (62%) perceives caseloads as highly problematic for staff retention. Another 31% of state agencies feel that caseload is somewhat problematic.
3. Only 13% of private agencies believe that caseload is highly problematic for staff retention in comparison to 39% that cite workload in general as highly problematic.
4. Among private agencies with low turnover and with high turnover, perceptions about caseloads are very similar.
 - 32% of low turnover agencies believe caseload is highly problematic

- 39% of high turnover agencies believe caseload is highly problematic
- On average, low turnover agencies report 16 child cases per worker and 12 family cases per worker
- On average, high turnover agencies report 14 child cases per worker and 11 family cases per worker

In the subsequent tables and discussion points on problems and strategies, it is important to remember these are perceptions of managers or supervisors. The workers were not questioned directly about recruitment and retention.

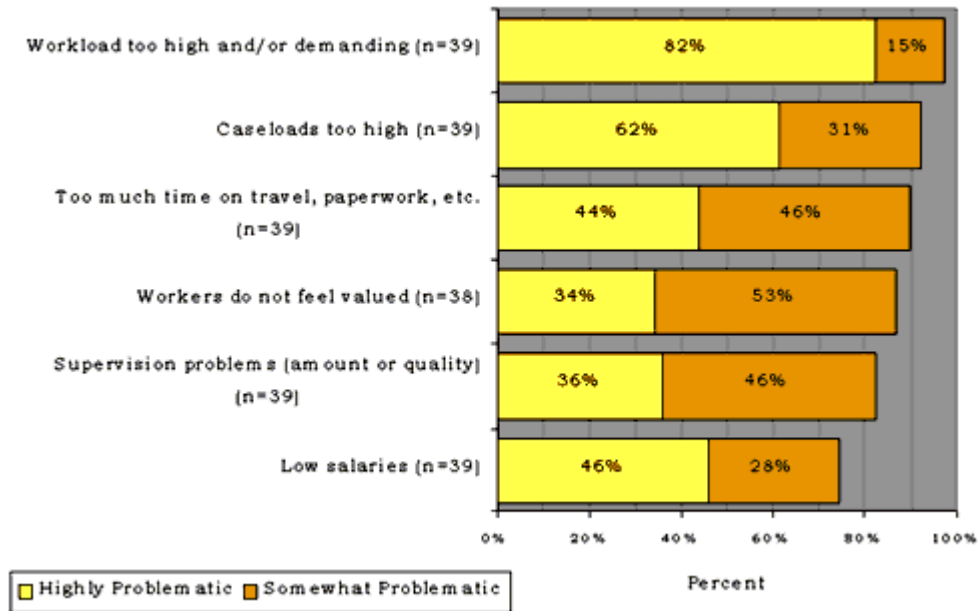
Notable Recruitment and Hiring Problems: State Agencies



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Problematic," "Somewhat Problematic," and "Highly Problematic."

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notable Retention Problems: State Agencies



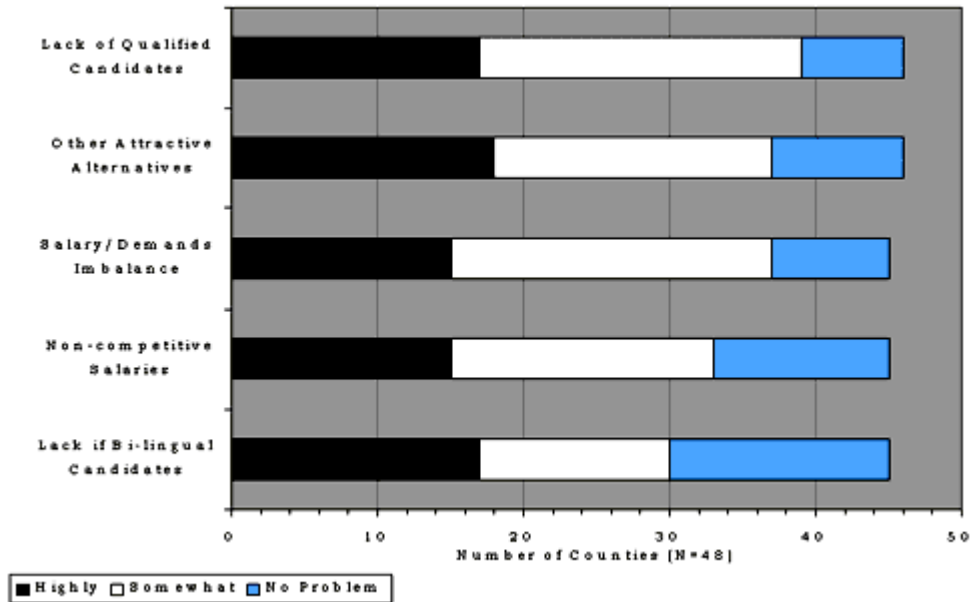
NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Problematic," "Somewhat Problematic," and "Highly Problematic."

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notes on State Agencies' Recruitment and Retention Problems:

1. The factors involved in recruitment and retention problems are varied, complex, and widespread.
2. A perceived imbalance between job demands and compensation during recruitment along with high and demanding workloads are the most highly problematic retention issues faced by state agencies.
3. Non-competitive starting salaries and low salaries in general were rated as highly or somewhat problematic by 80% and 74% of state agencies, respectively.
4. Several notable retention issues are based more on agency management than fiscal constraints, including time spent on extraneous tasks, workers not feeling valued, and supervision problems.

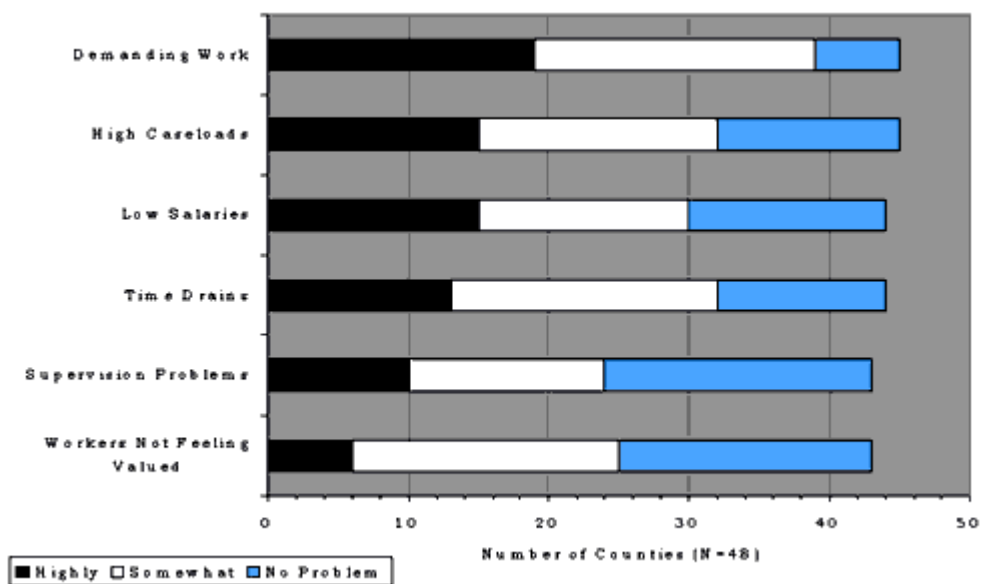
Most Problematic County Recruitment Issues



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Problematic," "Somewhat Problematic," and "Highly Problematic."

NOTE: The graph of county responses is based on number of counties, rather than the percentage of counties, and includes "No Problem" ratings.

Most Problematic County Retention Issues



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Problematic," "Somewhat Problematic," and "Highly Problematic."

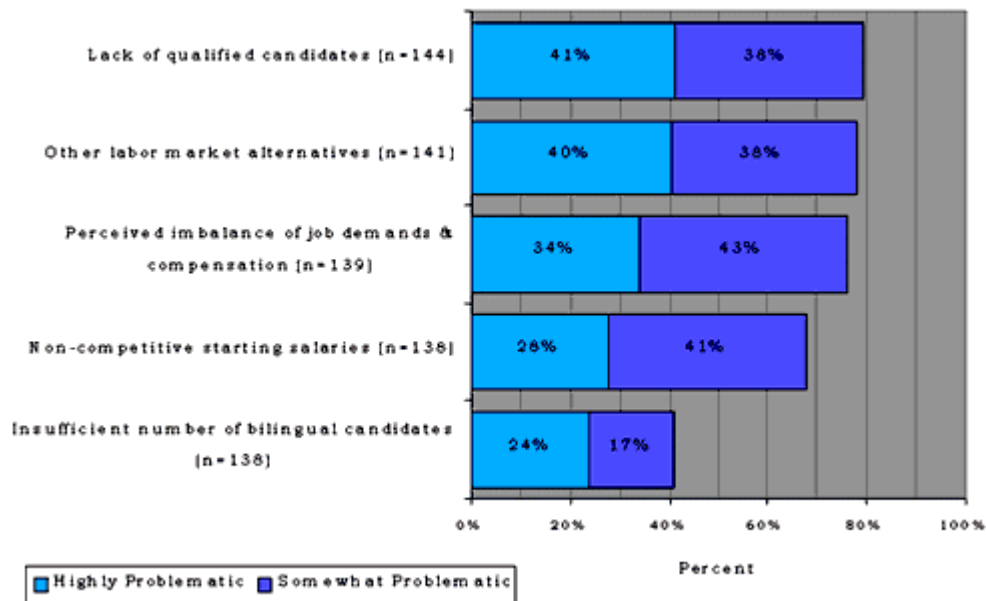
NOTE: The graph of county responses is based on number of counties, rather than the percentage of counties, and includes "No Problem" ratings.

Notes on County Agencies' Recruitment and Retention Problems:

1. Counties and states generally view factors involved in recruitment and retention problems in a similar way. The four highest rated recruitment problems and six top rated retention problems were the same for counties and states.
2. Counties rated more factors as not being a problem, and for those factors identified, counties generally rated them as somewhat less problematic than states.
3. A lack of qualified candidates and other attractive labor market alternatives for job seekers were the highest rated county recruitment problems.
4. High and demanding workloads, high caseloads, low salaries, and time drains were rated as most the problematic factors for retention by counties

-

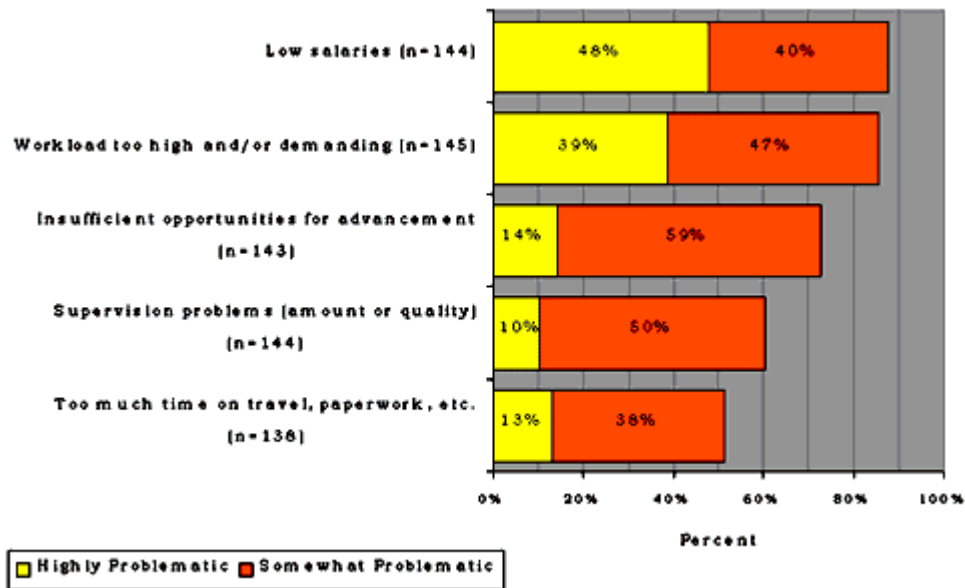
Notable Recruitment and Hiring Problems: Private Agencies



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Problematic," "Somewhat Problematic," and "Highly Problematic."

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notable Retention Problems: Private Agencies



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Problematic," "Somewhat Problematic," and "Highly Problematic."

NOTE: "n" refers to the number of agencies that responded to the item.

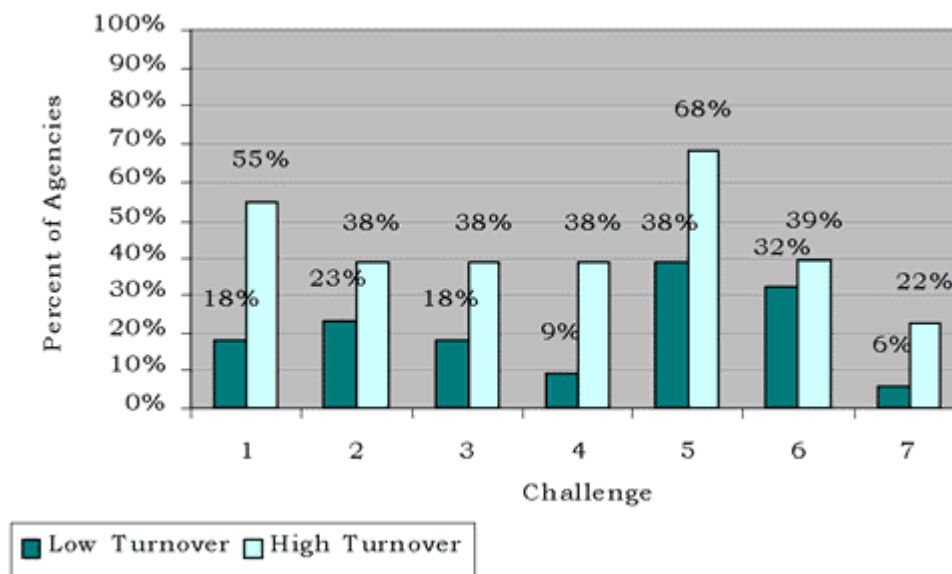
Notes on Private Agencies' Recruitment and Retention Problems:

1. Like findings for the state agencies, workload and salary issues underlie many of the notable staff recruitment and staff retention problems faced by private agencies.
2. The balance of workload and compensation is problematic for recruitment in 77% of the private agencies, and 73% of the agencies perceive that insufficient opportunities for advancement are a problem for retention.

3. In general, low salaries are problematic for more private agencies than are non-competitive starting salaries although both affect a majority of the agencies (88% versus 69%, respectively).
4. Demanding workloads are problematic for 86% of the private agencies.

An interesting follow-up to these data is the comparison of private agencies with low to those with high turnover.

**Highly Problematic Recruitment and Retention Issues:
Private Agencies with High vs. Low Turnover**



RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS:

1. A perceived imbalance of the demands of the job and financial compensation offered
2. Other attractive labor market alternatives for job seekers
3. Lack of qualified candidates
4. Starting salaries that are not competitive with comparable positions elsewhere

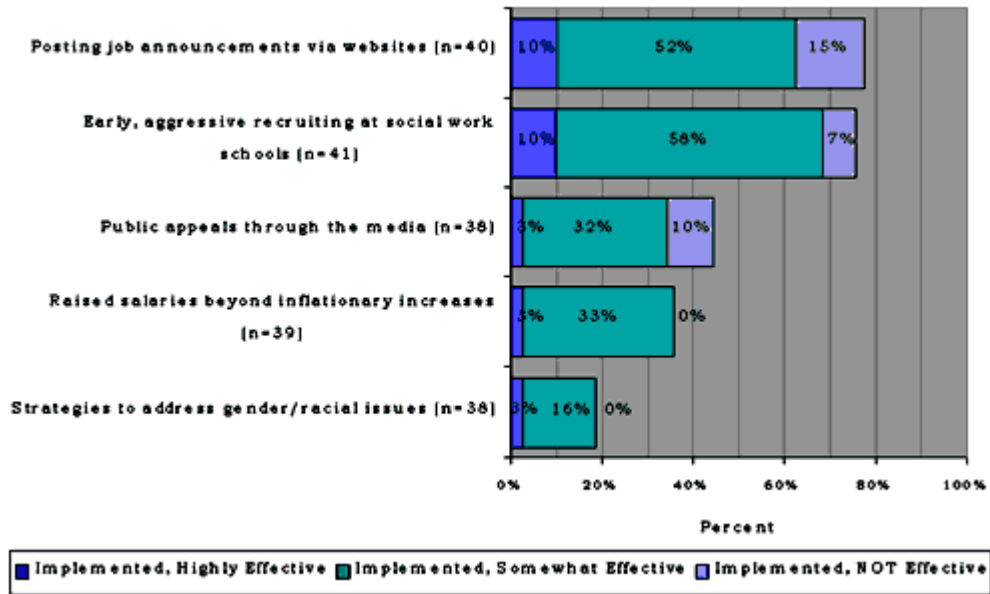
RETENTION PROBLEMS:

5. Low salaries
6. Workload too high and/or demanding
7. Insufficient opportunities for promotion and career advancement in the agency

Notes on Hiring and Retention in Private Agencies (High v. Low Turnover):

1. Private agencies with low turnover and those with high turnover among direct service caseworkers are citing the same problems for recruitment and retention albeit to varying degrees.
 2. Salaries and advancement are highly problematic for more high turnover agencies than low turnover agencies.
 3. A dearth of qualified candidates is also problematic for more high turnover agencies than low turnover agencies. Relative to the issue of qualified candidates, one must ask who is a qualified candidate? What are the educational and licensure requirements?
 4. In fact, requirements for the turnover groups are comparable for direct service caseworkers:
 - 33% of low turnover and 25% of high turnover agencies require a social work license
 - 56% of low turnover and 59% of high turnover agencies require a bachelor's degree
 - 38% of low turnover and 24% of high turnover agencies require a master's degree
-
1. And for supervisors:
 - 39% of low turnover and 43% of high turnover agencies require a social work license
 - 27% of low turnover and 35% of high turnover agencies require a bachelor's degree
 - 73% of low turnover and 65% of high turnover agencies require a master's degree

Frequently Implemented Recruitment Strategies: State Agencies



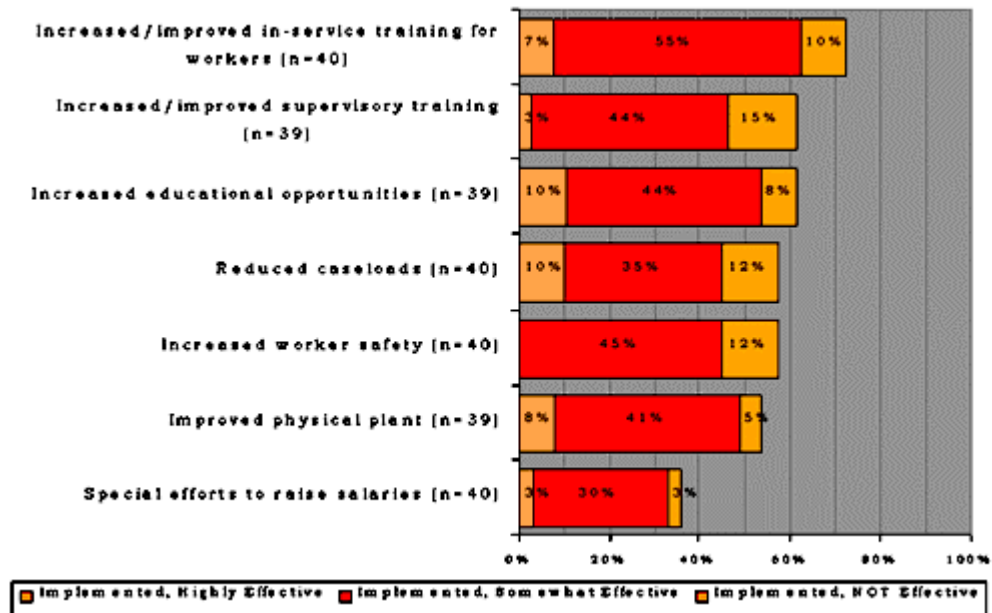
NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Implemented," "Implemented, Not Effective," "Implemented, Somewhat Effective," and "Implemented, Highly Effective."

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notes on State Agencies' Recruitment Strategies:

1. Although states have implemented many recruitment strategies, there are no "magic bullets."
2. The top three state strategies implemented involve direct recruitment techniques. However, each strategy had comparable proportions of state agencies that found it not effective as found it highly effective.
3. Each of the most frequently implemented strategies had modest ratings (i.e., 10% or less) of being highly effective. Overwhelmingly, agencies rated strategies as somewhat effective, including raising salaries beyond inflationary increases.
4. Due to this moderate level of effectiveness of any given strategy, states may want to consider multiple and connected recruitment strategies in order to produce larger improvements in staff recruitment over time.

Frequently Implemented Retention Strategies: State Agencies



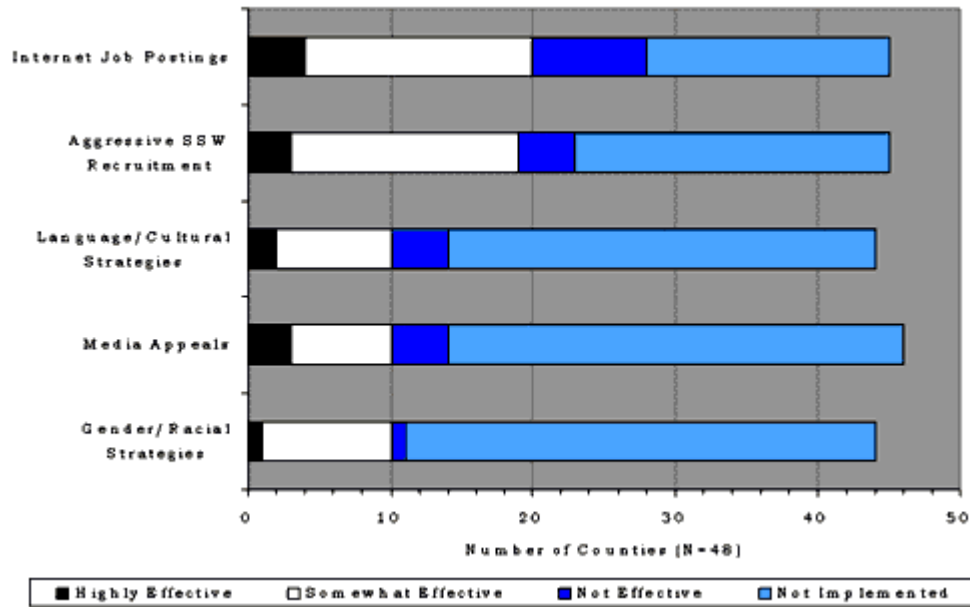
NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Implemented," "Implemented, Not Effective," "Implemented, Somewhat Effective," and "Implemented, Highly Effective."

NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notes on State Agencies' Retention Strategies:

1. Like recruitment strategies, states overwhelmingly rated all retention strategies as somewhat effective and, in general, similar proportions of agencies rated the strategies as highly effective and not effective.
2. In-service training for workers, supervisory training, and increased educational opportunities were the prominent strategies implemented by states. These "softer" strategies generally are within the volition and authority of managers to implement and often require little or no new resources.
3. Strategies requiring new resources, like reducing caseloads and special efforts to raise salaries, were implemented somewhat less frequently (57% and 36%, respectively) but with comparable state ratings of highly effective and not effective.
4. Like recruitment strategies, states may want to consider a mix of retention strategies that are inter-connected to have the greatest positive impact on staff retention.

Most Effective County Recruitment Strategies



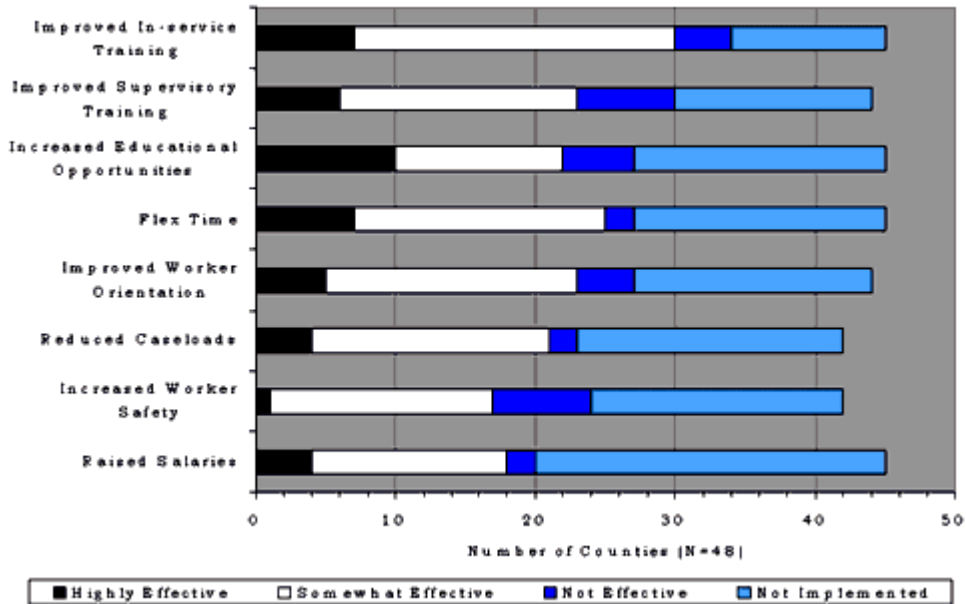
NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Implemented," "Implemented, Not Effective," "Implemented, Somewhat Effective," and "Implemented, Highly Effective."

NOTE: The graph of county responses is based on number of counties, rather than the percentage of counties, and includes "No Problem" ratings.

Notes on County Agencies' Recruitment Strategies:

1. Counties have also implemented many recruitment strategies, but have found no "magic bullets." Like states, counties overwhelmingly assess implemented strategies as "Somewhat Effective," but counties rate strategies as "Highly Effective" more frequently than states.
2. Like states, Internet job postings and early and aggressive recruiting at schools of social work are the top two county strategies, with 45% and 43% rated as highly or somewhat effective respectively.
3. Counties implemented the strategy of raising salaries beyond normal inflationary increases less frequently than states (22% vs. 36%), but similarly assessed this strategy as somewhat effective.

Most Effective County Retention Strategies



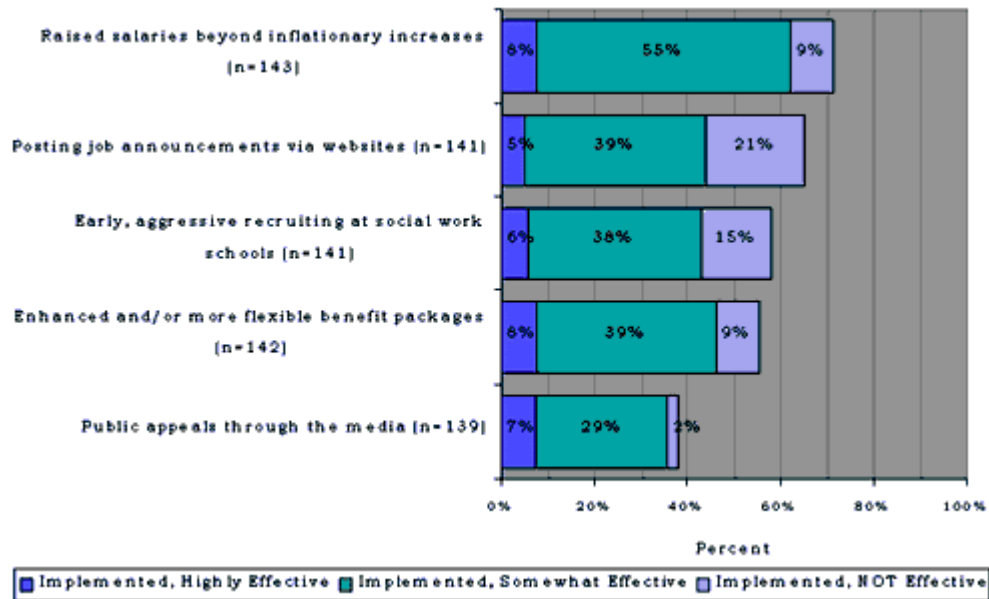
NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Implemented," "Implemented, Not Effective," "Implemented, Somewhat Effective," and "Implemented, Highly Effective."

NOTE: The graph of county responses is based on number of counties, rather than the percentage of counties, and includes "No Problem" ratings.

Notes on County Agencies' Retention Strategies:

1. Counties have implemented many retention strategies and have generally rated their effectiveness as higher than states. The predominant rating for all county strategies, however, is "Somewhat Effective."
2. Counties rated three of the top four retention strategies the same as the states did: improved in-service training, improved supervisory training, and increased educational opportunities.
3. Like states, counties see "softer" strategies as important for addressing turnover problems (six of the top seven strategies).
4. Like recruitment strategies, counties may want to consider a customized combination of retention strategies that work together to respond to the specific conditions in that county.

Frequently Implemented Recruitment Strategies: Private Agencies



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Implemented," "Implemented, Not Effective," "Implemented, Somewhat Effective," and "Implemented, Highly Effective."

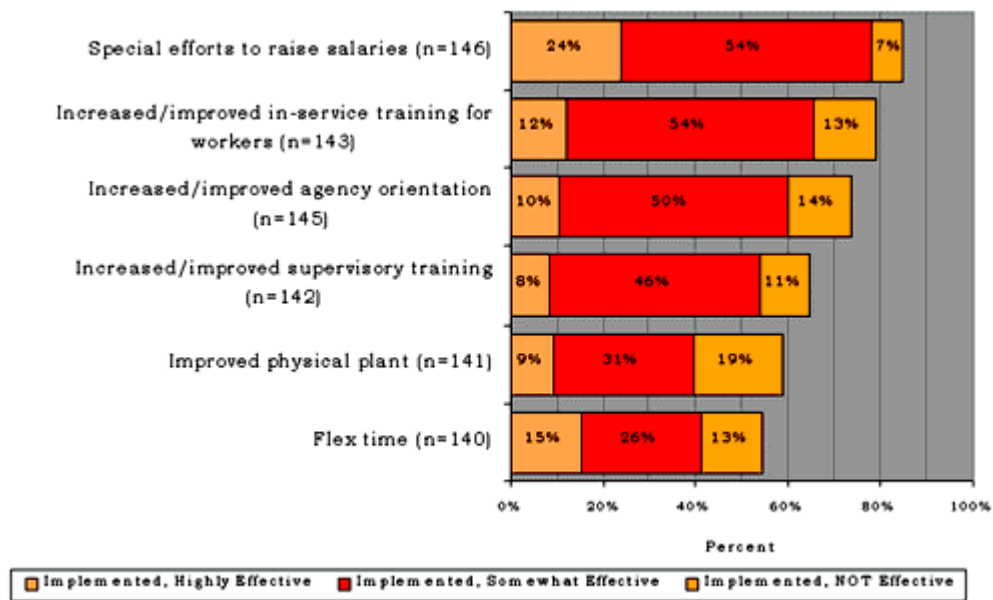
NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notes on Private Agencies' Recruitment Strategies:

1. Comparable to the state agencies, private agencies most often implemented strategies to recruit candidates and raise salaries. In addition, private agencies tried to enhance benefit packages.
2. Also akin to state agency results, modest proportions of private agencies reported the strategies were highly effective.
3. Matching strategies to problems:
 - 38% to 65% tried recruiting techniques- 79% reported lack of qualified candidates as problematic
 - 72% raised salaries and 56% enhanced benefits- 69% said non-competitive starting salaries are a problem and 77% rated an imbalance between job demands and compensation as problematic

1. It is worth noting that the results from additional analyses comparing low and high turnover private agencies showed little difference between the groups in implementation or effectiveness of recruitment and hiring strategies.
2. Regardless of low or high turnover, the proportions of the private agencies that found any of strategies highly effective were less than 10%.
3. The only exceptions were public appeals through the media, 18% of low turnover agencies found highly effective, and raising salaries, 23% of the high turnover agencies found highly effective.

Frequently Implemented Retention Strategies: Private Agencies



NOTE: Respondents rated each of the items as "Not Implemented," "Implemented, Not Effective," "Implemented, Somewhat Effective," and "Implemented, Highly Effective."

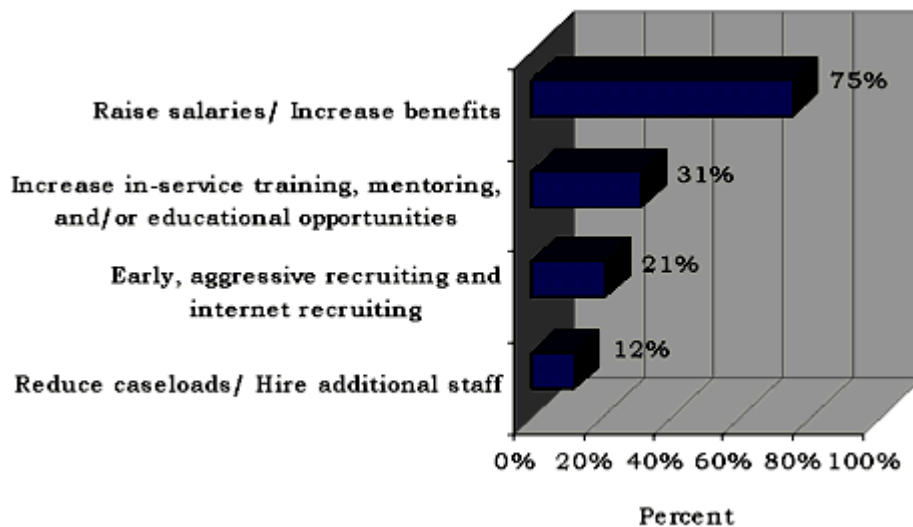
NOTE: "n" refers to the **number of agencies that responded to the item.**

Notes on Private Agencies' Retention Strategies:

1. Like the state agencies, improved training for workers and for supervisors were two of the most frequently implemented retention strategies. Approximately 66%

- of the private agencies improved training for workers and found it effective; 54% of the agencies improved supervisor training and found it effective.
2. Among the private agencies, 24% found that raising salaries was highly effective at retaining staff (54% found it somewhat effective).
 3. Matching strategies to problems:
 - 85% made special efforts to raise salaries- 88% reported that low salaries are problematic
 - 65% improved training for supervisors and 60% reported supervision problems
1. Private agencies with low turnover and agencies with high turnover tried to implement similar retention strategies and reported comparable effectiveness.
 2. Like the outcomes of the recruitment strategies, the effectiveness of the strategies were modest and comparable between high and low turnover agencies.
 3. Again salaries were an exception, slightly more high turnover agencies (35%) than low turnover agencies (23%) found that raising salaries was highly effective. It is possible that high turnover agencies had more room for improvement in salaries.

Most Important Actions and Initiatives: Private Agencies (CWLA members)



Notes on Actions and Initiatives in Private Agencies:

1. Agencies were asked an open-ended question about important actions and/or initiatives to take to recruit and retain a qualified child welfare workforce. One hundred private agencies that are CWLA members responded to this question.

2. Results reaffirmed that strategies currently being implemented are the strategies private agencies feel should be implemented.
 - 75% advocated for raising salaries and increasing benefits
 - 31% suggested increasing in-service training, mentoring, and educational opportunities
 - 21% emphasized early and aggressive recruiting and noted recruiting via internet resources
 - 12% mentioned reducing caseloads and hiring additional staff

Most Important Actions and Initiatives: State and County Agencies

<u>Action/Initiative</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Responses</u>
Increased salaries – competitive and commensurate	62	14%
Staff training – pre, in-service, and supervisory	51	12%
Reduced caseloads, workloads, and supervisory ratios	47	11%
Service delivery and management improvements	37	8%
Changed job conditions – flex time, mentoring, and job sharing	36	8%
Improved recruitment techniques and SSW partnering	34	8%

Notes on Actions and Initiatives in Public Agencies:

1. State and county child welfare agencies also were asked an open-ended question about the most important actions and initiatives they and their partners must take to recruit and retain qualified child welfare workforce. Thirty-five states and 45 counties provided 441 responses to this question.
2. APHSA coded all responses, and found that these public agencies identified;
 - Increased salaries that are competitive and commensurate with job responsibilities most frequently (14% of all responses).
 - Staff training—pre/in-service and supervisory (12% of all responses)

- Reduced caseloads, workloads, and supervisory ratios (11% of all responses)
 - Three sets of actions each had about 8% of the responses—service delivery and management improvements; changed job conditions; and improved recruitment techniques.
-

For further information on the Workforce Survey:

Tom Lengyel, MSW, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Evaluation Services
Alliance for Children and Families
tlengyel@alliance1.org

Gary Cyphers, M.A., M.P.H.
Director of Research
American Public Human Services Association
gcyphers@aphsa.org

Alicia Drais, Ph.D.
Research Associate
Child Welfare League of America
adrais@cwla.org

For further information on CWLA's Workforce Initiative:

Floyd Alwon, Ed.D.
Director, Walker Trieschman Center CWLA
300 Congress Street, Suite 305
Quincy, MA 02169
falwon@cwla.org