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*A partnership for Education, Student Support, Training, Evaluation, and Research*

## The 2011 California Public Child Welfare Workforce Study: American Indian/Native American Staff

### **Key Results:**

American Indian/Native American child welfare workers constitute 2% of the child welfare social workers/supervisors in 28 of 58 counties in California. The majority who responded to the 2011 California Public Child Welfare *Individual Worker Survey* are case-carrying social workers. There is a high level of educational attainment among the American Indian workers who responded to this survey—63% have master's degrees of some kind, slightly higher than the statewide average of 60%. There is interest in obtaining an MSW among the others.

Although it looks as if the percentage of American Indian/Native American public child welfare social workers is double that of the American Indian child population with substantiated allegations of child abuse/neglect and those in their first entry to foster care based on CWS/CMS data, these data do not include American Indian children in care of the Tribes.

In collaboration with the County Welfare Directors Association and the California Department of Social Services, CalSWEC has surveyed the state's public child welfare workforce every three to five years since 1992 to determine the extent to which the state is meeting its requirements for Master's-level social workers among child welfare social work staff.

The data for this 2011 study were gathered between August 2011 and February 2012 using two online survey instruments. The first was the *Agency Administrative Survey* aimed at gathering administrative data about agency staffing such as the number of staff, vacancies, need for bilingual workers, turnover and the effects of the economic downturn on hiring.

The second was the *Individual Worker Survey*. This survey was designed to obtain a more detailed perspective on the workforce by having individual child welfare staff complete it. As a result of the statewide participation of county child welfare agencies and public child welfare staff, we were able to gather substantial information on the demographics of the workforce, service assignments, education, professional licensure, experience level, interest in further training and further education.

CalSWEC has supported an American Indian Recruitment (AIR) Initiative since 1997 to recruit American Indian students to the title IV-E public child welfare program to work in the Tribes with American Indian families. In 2011, three sites were selected (CSU Humboldt, Stanislaus State and San Diego State) to develop regional AIR projects. The Initiative's goals are to improve opportunities for American Indian/Native American students to obtain their MSWs at a California university, to improve the overall Title IV-E curriculum with informed ways of working with ICWA and American Indian children, their families, and their Tribes.

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## ***I. Sample Respondents***

Sixty-four (64) respondents to the *Individual Worker Survey* identified as American Indian/Native American, amounting to 0.9% of all workforce study respondents and 2% of the social workers/supervisors. This is most likely an underestimate of the American Indian/Native American staff, since there were also categories “biracial” and “multiracial” in which we did not ask respondents to specify further.

## ***II. Where do American Indian/Native American child welfare staff work?***

The table below shows where American Indian/Native American staff work by training academy region (<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/about-regional-training-academy-coordination-project>). Training academies administer the Common Core Child Welfare Curriculum through the state to all newly hired child welfare workers.

Region	Frequency	Percent
Northern	16	25.0
Bay Area	14	21.9
Central	13	20.3
Los Angeles	7	10.9
Southern	14	21.9
Total	64	100.0

American Indian respondents work in 28 of the 58 California counties<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Staff Positions***

American Indian/Native American respondents are in direct services— 46.7% are case-carrying social workers and 15.6% are supervisors. 15 of the 30 case carrying social workers state that they provide “back-end” services. This is the traditional IV-E service: permanency planning, foster care, and ongoing services.

Position	Frequency	Percent
Clerical Staff	2	3.1
Social work assistants	5	7.8
Case-carrying social workers	30	46.7
NON-case-carrying social workers <sup>2</sup>	12	18.8
Supervisors	10	15.6
Managers	3	4.7
Administrators	1	1.6
Total	64	100

<sup>1</sup> We did not receive individual worker information from Del Norte, Colusa, Sutter, or San Mateo counties.

<sup>2</sup> Non-case-carrying social workers include trainers, and other professional social workers who provide indirect services such as licensing, facilitating TDM meetings, planning, implementing policies such as inter-county transfers, and evaluation.

### ***III. Service Assignments***

In addition to the usual services assignments (Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanency Planning), 10 American Indian respondents report they work in specialized units such as,

- Court ordered visitation monitor
- CPU (Central Placement Unit) Foster Care
- ISW [Intake Social Work] & HIGH RISK UNIT
- Linkages<sup>3</sup>
- I assist social workers in all these areas, except for court services and/or adoption.
- Options [0-5 Substance Exposed] children on my caseload. Clinically oversee Options Nurse. [caseload plus supervision]
- Prenatal Substance Exposure-Options
- Relative Placement Unit
- Specialized Family Services with Medically Fragile Children or special needs children
- Voluntary Services only unit members plus Family Maintenance and Family Reunification only unit members

#### *Service Assignment Changes*

Almost one third of the American Indian/Native American respondents have had service assignment changes in the past year (21 out of 64--32.8%). At least two respondents have moved more than once. One person was promoted. Generally the service assignment changes noted involved county need-based redeployment and/or adding responsibilities to an existing job. The percentage of American Indian/native American staff who have changed service assignments change is higher than the general sample of California child welfare social workers (24.3%)(See the Turnover Data Brief for more detail).

- Assigned to another department, but still manage adoptions and assist in child welfare projects.
- Family Reunification case added.
- From all Family Maintenance and Family Reunification to Voluntary Services only, and then to both concurrently
- From March 2010 through May 2010, I was supervising Emergency Response. In May 2010, I was moved to supervise Court Dependency. In November 2010, I was moved to supervise Family Maintenance/Family Reunification/Permanency Unit
- Have been assigned additional duties and other programs to supervise
- I moved from a Policy/Quality Assurance position back to Emergency Response
- I was a supervisor promoted to Program Manager
- I was originally assigned to Intake/Information/Referral
- I was previously in the Parent Search Unit

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<sup>3</sup> Connection between child welfare and CALWORKS (TANF)

- I was previously transferred involuntarily to Dependency for 18 months before returning to my social work position in adoptions
- I went from being just Permanent Placement to being combined with Family Services
- I worked in Emergency Response and transferred to the Relative Placement Unit within the fiscal year.
- Just started in this dept.
- More Emergency Response and Voluntary Family Maintenance [cases]
- Moved from Intake Social Work to Immediate Response Team Member for Intake and Assessment
- Previously assigned to Quality Assurance as a Program Specialist. Transferred because of budget cuts
- Prior was working in Emergency Response
- Re-deployed to Family Maintenance/Family Reunification/Permanent Placement position
- Told to do grievance reports that used to be completed by supervisors
- Vertical case management
- Worked in Emergency Response in a different county

#### ***IV. Educational Levels***

There are 24 MSWs (18 are Title IV-E participants) and 16 MA, MSs who identify as American Indian/Native American (including one who identifies as a IV-E participant).

##### ***American Indian IV-E Participation and Educational Levels***

Highest educational level	IV-E participant	Not a IV-E participant
High School	0	2
Community college	0	2
Some College	0	5
BA, BS	0	10
BASW	0	2
MA,MS	1	15
MSW	18	6
PhD	1	1
total	20	43

40 respondents have completed Common Core public child welfare training. Nine have completed Supervisor Core training.

## V. Demographics

*Language.* Five American Indian/Native American respondents use Spanish on the job and one uses American Sign Language.

*Age.* The average of American Indian/Native American respondents is 46.9 years, slightly older than the average of the general population of child welfare staff<sup>4</sup>.

<b><i>Average Ages of American Indian/Native American child welfare staff</i></b>		
Which of the following best describes your current position? Check only one answer.	Mean	N
Front-end or Intake Case-carrying child welfare social worker	45.2	13
Back-end or Ongoing Case-carrying child welfare social worker	48.9	15
Combined Front-end AND back-end case-carrying child welfare	32.0	1
NON-case carrying child welfare social worker	46.5	11
Supervisor	50.2	8
Overall	46.9	60

### *Years of Experience*

<b><i>Average Years of Experience of American Indian/Native American child welfare staff</i></b>		
	N	Mean (years)
How many years have you been working in your CURRENT JOB? Please indicate the number.	63	5.5
How many years have you been working in ANY POSITION FOR THIS COUNTY?	63	10.4
How many years have you worked in the FIELD OF CHILD WELFARE (at any agency)?	61	11.9
What is your present age?	60	46.9
Valid N	56	

## VI. Desire for further education & training

*Education:* American Indian/Native American public child welfare staff indicate interest in obtaining higher degrees with and without CalSWEC support or LADCFS support. Some respondents indicated they would like more than one degree.

<b><i>Desire for further education</i></b>			
Do you desire further education?	With NO CalSWEC support	With CalSWEC support	With LADCFS support
BASW	0	5	0
MSW	3	13	2

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<sup>4</sup> For supervisors in the overall sample the average age is 46.9; for social workers the average age is 40.6 years.

*Training:* Requests for additional training from the American Indian/Native American respondents to the Workforce Survey 2011. Seventy percent want more training; some (12) wanted more but “not now”; only 5 respondents indicated they did not want more training.

Many of these requested topics are introduced in the Common Core (see <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/california-common-core-curricula> ). For example, SDM and safety/risks assessments are covered as part of “Critical Thinking”, but these workers are requesting more in-depth training on these topics.

## 1. Child Welfare Topics

- SDM, Safety/risk assessments
- Any new information or laws
- Class that elaborates more on specifics of 300 WIC
- Updated child welfare laws/major cases, i.e. Greene v. Camreta
- Court report writing, policy
- Placement and Court Services Operations
- Fostering Connections After 18/AB 12
- Addressing negative behaviors in children, safety and awareness on the job, understanding our clients (parents and children) and their situations
- Mental illness in teens and young adults
- Congenital/Genetic Anomalies [Cardiac, Neuro, etc.]
- Other modalities of treatment used besides psychotropic medication
- Working with parents of special needs children
- Refresher on ICWA
- I would like to participate in Native American sponsored trainings centered on working with Indian people
- Domestic Violence Issues, Substance Abuse Issues
- Domestic violence training, vicarious trauma, SSI/SSA training, gang training, GLBTQ training
- DV, Family Violence, Drug recognition
- Effects of drug use on parents and children
- Medical marijuana and pregnancy
- Stress & burnout

## 2. Professional Development

- I would like to get my MSW
- Specific to professional development and opportunities for promotion not just internal county trainings as a result of legislation or internal trainings because of a corrective action plan.
- I would like to continue to train in forensic interviewing
- Leadership
- Any training that I may receive BBS credit for LCSW licensure hours
- At some point I hope to become a supervisor and would like to take supervisor's training
- Adaptive Leadership, Management Skills, Dealing with Personnel Issues, Organizing & Prioritizing the work.
- Implementation Science, Utilization Focused Evaluation

### 3. Additional comments on the training process from American Indian participants

- Diversity training from Black providers
- I do not like the new required on-line courses. I do not feel I learn as much and it is very difficult to complete these courses. Some of the courses were very time consuming and not beneficial.
- Yes [I would like addition training], but due to the high caseloads, reduced number of workers, there is literally no time to attend trainings. I signed up for numerous trainings but was unable to attend them due to crises on the cases.

## ***VII. Staff ethnicity compared to the California child population and the population of children in care***

One of CalSWEC's goals is to help diversify the workforce. Consequently CalSWEC's mission has been to actively recruit students who represent the children and families in the child welfare system.

The next table compares the racial/ethnic make-up of the children with their proportion of substantiated allegations of child abuse/neglect and first entries into foster care for the year ending on June 30, 2011, to the racial/ethnic make-up of the child welfare staff.<sup>5</sup> The number of allegations was reported by 90% of the counties for the year ending on June 30, 2011.

The proportion of *White IV-E child welfare workers* is less than that of the *White non IV-E child welfare workers*. The proportions of IV-E educated workers who identify as *Hispanic/Latino/Mexican American/Chicano, American Indian/Native American, or Asian American/ Pacific Islander* are greater than the proportions of those ethnicities in the non IV-E sample of child welfare workers.<sup>6</sup>

Significantly, this table does not include American Indian children in care of the Tribes.

The corresponding *IV-E* and *non-IV-E* staff proportions are still below the proportions of *Black* and *Hispanic* children in care. The workforce implications are that there is still work to be done to provide workers who reflect the child welfare population, particularly the *Black* and *Hispanic* populations. Workers identify as *Bi-, Multi-racial, and Other* but there are no such categories in the Child Welfare Services Reports data at this time.

Although the sample of American Indian/Native American child welfare staff appears to be double that of the proportion of American Indian/Native American children in the system, children in care of the Tribes are not accounted for in these data.

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<sup>5</sup> Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Williams, D., Simon, V., Hamilton, D., Lou, C., Peng, C., Moore, M., King, B., Henry, C., & Nuttbrock, A. (2012). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved 8/13/2012, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare) Retrieved August 14, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Respondents were allowed to check more than one ethnicity/race and about 5.3% of them did.



***Staff Ethnicity compared to the Children with Substantiated Allegations and First Entries into Foster Care (as of July 1, 2011)***

<b>Child Racial/Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Proportion of children with substantiated allegations (n= 89,766)</b>	<b>Proportion of children with first entries into foster care (n = 25,140)</b>	<b>Proportion of NON IV-E child welfare social workers &amp; supervisors</b>	<b>Proportion of IV-E child welfare social workers &amp; supervisors</b>
<b>Black/African American</b>	.14	.18	.13	.12
<b>White</b>	.25	.27	.47	.41
<b>Hispanic</b>	.54	.51	.30	.36
<b>Asian/P.I.</b>	.03	.03	.06	.09
<b>American Indian/Native American</b>	.01	.01	.02	.02
<b>Missing</b>	.03	.00		
<b>Bi-racial, Multi-racial, and Other</b>			.07	.08
<b>Total</b>	1.0	1.0		

## ***VIII. Appendix***

### ***Methodology & Regulations***

Although the methodology for this study has changed since 1992, the basic questions remain: “How many social workers and other professional staff work in public child welfare agencies in California? What proportion of the professional staff hold master’s degrees in social work/welfare?” Two online surveys were used to gather the data.

First, the 58 counties were asked to provide census information about the population of professional active/encumbered child welfare staff positions, needs for MSWs, vacancies, and proportion of bilingual workers among the staff population. 55 counties responded with administrative census data. Three counties that declined to participate were located in the northern region of the state and have small populations. Since those counties responded in 2008, their 2008 data was substituted for the 2011 missing data when the proportions of MSWs were calculated. The missing data amounted to 0.457% of the total population.

Second, a web-based survey was sent to all individual workers in 55 counties<sup>7</sup> by their child welfare or human resources departments to provide educational level, service assignment, position, race/ethnicity, age, years of service, needs for additional education, and training experiences. 3496 responses were received from workers from 54 counties. When matched to the proportionate distribution reported in the census data there were not significant differences. This means that the sample responses are representative of the distribution of child welfare positions in the state.

In all but four counties, all public child welfare social work assistants, social workers, supervisors, managers/program managers, and administrators were given the opportunity to respond to the individual

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<sup>7</sup> One county declined to send the individual worker survey to its workers but did complete the census survey. Three counties declined to participate in the study.

worker survey. Social work assistants were included in this study because they can be a source of “home grown” social workers, and we wanted to gauge their interest in seeking additional degree education. Where appropriate, they were enumerated.

The application and approval letters are on file in the CalSWEC Office and the University of California Berkeley Office for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Copies of the surveys are available upon request.

### ***California State Educational Qualifications for Child Welfare Staff***

The Manual of Policies and Procedures, Division 31 Child Welfare Services Program, Regulation 31-070 states that “County staff who provide emergency response and family maintenance services shall meet the following qualifications:

“.11 At least 50 percent of the professional staff providing emergency response services, and at least 50 percent of the professional staff providing family maintenance services, shall possess master’s degree in social work, or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the State Personnel Board or a county civil service board.”

“.12 One hundred (100) percent of the supervisors of staff providing emergency response and family maintenance services shall possess a master’s degree in social work, or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the State Personnel Board or a county civil service board.”

The standards for MSW social workers in Adoptions are located in the Community Care Licensing Manual Sections 89152-89155.



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