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

The California 2011 Public Child Welfare Workforce Study: BASWs in the Workforce

Key Results: 186 respondents with BASWs responded to the *Individual Worker Survey*; 47 (25.3%) were IV-E graduates.

BASWs in the California child welfare system are primarily case-carrying social workers, assigned in similar ways as the MSW social workers. They are likely to be found in working throughout the state, regardless of region.

In 2008, 159 child welfare staff indicated they would like to pursue a BASW degree with CalSWEC support. In 2011 that number has diminished somewhat to 106.

However 145 (78%) of those who already have BASWs want to continue their education with Title IV-E support for an MSW.

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.

Due to indications that hiring trends for graduates of the BASW programs have been trending downward, the CalSWEC Board's Workforce Development Committee has taken up the BASW program for discussion on its agenda. BASWs have been hit especially hard by the economic downturn of the past three years.

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I. The California Public Child Welfare Staff Population¹

- Compared to 2008, the entire public child welfare workforce has gotten smaller. There were 10.7% more child welfare social workers and supervisors overall in 2008 than there were in 2011 in California's 58 counties.
- The proportions did not decrease in similar ways over all positions.
 - There are 7.2% fewer supervisors and 21.4% fewer case-carrying social workers in 2011, when compared to 2008 levels.
 - There are 52.8% more non-case-carrying social workers. This may be a response to increased teaming and coordination demands, new ways of organizing and prioritizing the work, and/or additional documentation associated with regulations.
- Although the 2918 responses from the individual worker sample constituted only 28.4% of the 2011 population,² the sample distribution by position generally reflects the population distribution by position as reported by the counties, with slightly fewer case-carrying social workers responding and slightly more supervisors responding.

2008 – 2011 Comparison of the Population of All California public child welfare workers³

Year	Case-Carrying Social Workers	Non-Case Carrying Social workers⁴	Supervisors	Total
2008 Population	8772	1027	1813	11612
Proportion in the 2008 Population	75%	9%	16%	100%
2011 Population	7225	1569	1691	10485
Proportion in the 2011 Population	69%	15%	16%	100%

2008 – 2011 Comparison of the Sample of All California public child welfare workers

Sample	Case-Carrying Social workers	Non-Case Carrying Social workers	Supervisors	Total
2008 Sample	2027	527	564	3118
Proportion in the 2008 Sample	65%	17%	18%	100%
2011 Sample	1901	456	561	2918
Proportion in the 2011 Sample	65%	16%	19%	100%

¹ Three small counties did not report on the population of child welfare staff; so their 2008 numbers were substituted for the missing data.

² The proportion of respondents to population in 2008 was 26.9%.

³ Full-time, part-time, and extra hire staff are included.

⁴ Non-case-carrying social workers are 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.

II. BASWs by job position and by geographical region

Job Position

Within this sample there are social workers with different levels of education. Although those with general BAs or BSs (n = 944) and those with MSWs (n = 1230) are the most numerous, there are 186 with BASW degrees.

A BASW degree is the undergraduate degree with a specialization in social work. Some California BASW programs are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); some are not. We do not distinguish between those who are accredited and those who are not in this report.

Since 2004, the CalSWEC Title IV-E program has supported undergraduates who are pursuing their BASWs in 6 accredited programs in the state: Humboldt State University, Chico State University, Fresno State University, Long Beach State University, San Bernardino State University, and San Diego State University, members of the California State University System. These programs follow a competency-based BASW curriculum for Title IV-E BASW students, in accordance with CSWE standards.

Educational Level by Job Position

Level of education	Other?	Social Work Assistants/ Clerical	Case- carrying Social Worker	NON-case carrying Child Welfare Social Worker/Trainer	Supervisor	Manager/ Administrator	Total
Other	1	1	6	2	2	1	13
High School	2	40	3	2	3	1	51
A.A. degree	5	46	33	10	11	3	108
Some College	8	125	18	15	15	8	189
B.A., B.S.	18	82	568	166	91	19	944
B.S.W., B.A.S.W.	3	4	133	25	16	5	186
M.A., M.S.	4	15	314	89	144	41	607
M.S.W., M.S.S.W.	3	6	764	124	254	79	1230
Ph.D. or other doctorate	1	1	21	9	10	3	45
Total	45	322	1860	442	546	160	3373

In 2011, 186 BASWs constitute 5.5% of the sample. This is virtually unchanged from 2008 when BASWs made up 5.7% of the sample.

*Region.*⁵ Most BASWs responding have not participated in a Title V-E educational program. Furthermore there is no association between having participated in a Title IV-E BASW program and what region in the state they are more likely to be found working (X^2 test of independence = 5.16, d.f. 4, $p = .272$).⁶

⁵ See county locations by region: <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/files/uploads/pdf/CalSWEC/counties.pdf>.

⁶ See: Franke, T., Ho, T. & Christie, C. (2012) The chi-square test: Often used and more often misinterpreted. *Journal of the American Evaluation Association*, 33, 3: 448-458.

BASW: non-IV-E & IV-E Participation by Region

Region	Did you participate in any IV-E stipend program?		Total BASWs by region
	YES	NO	
Northern	7	16	23
Bay Area	0	10	10
Central	11	22	33
Los Angeles	20	51	74
Southern	9	35	46
Total	47	134	186

III. BASW Sample Demographics: Race/Ethnicity and Age: All respondents compared to IV-E participants

One of CalSWEC's goals is to diversify the workforce. Consequently CalSWEC's programs have actively recruited students who represent the families and children in the child welfare system. The BASW workers are in general a diverse group; 41% are White. The ethnicity proportions are statistically no different between non IV-E and IV-E BASW participants (X^2 test of independence = 1.043, d.f. = 5, $p = .959$)

BASWs' Ethnicity/Race (Social Workers, Supervisors, Managers, & Administrators) ⁷

Race/Ethnicity	Non IV-E BASW	IV-E BASW Participants Only
African American /Black	22	8
American Indian/Native American/Alaskan Native	1	0
Asian American or Asian/Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	5	1
Hispanic/Latino(a)/Mexican/Chicano(a)	43	17
White/Caucasian	52	23
Biracial/ethnic/Multiracial/ethnic/Other	8	3
	131	52

Languages We asked, "If you regularly use any other language(s) besides English on the job, please list them here." About 33% of the BASW respondents replied that they do speak another language on the job; most of those speak Spanish.

⁷ Respondents were allowed to indicate more than one race/ethnicity.

Languages other than English used by BASWs on the job

Language	Frequency	Percent
No other language besides English	123	66
Hmong	1	.5
Lao	1	.5
Minimal/Some Spanish	2	1
Spanish	57	31
Tagalog (Filipino dialect, Bisaya)	2	1
Total	186	100%

IV. Service Assignments: What do BASWs do in the child welfare system? BASWs are assigned to more than one service area. IV-E trained BASWs generally follow the same distribution of service assignments as all the BASWs.

BASW Social Workers', Supervisors', Managers' & Administrators' Current Assignments

Department	All BASWs	IV-E BASW Participants Only
	Number	Number
Intake/Information/Referral	47	18
Differential Response	12	5
Emergency Response	78	26
Dependency Investigation/Court Services	37	9
Family Maintenance	75	20
Family Reunification	72	24
Forensic Interviewing	8	1
Permanency Planning	51	15
Adoptions	5	1
Family Preservation	15	7
Licensing	5	0
School-based Services	7	0
Wraparound Services	6	3
Team Decision Making	35	11
A specialized unit such as one serving "medically fragile babies"	30	9

In addition, BASWs report working in/with: DEC-Drug Endangered Children, the relative approval unit, Intensive Services, Out-of-Home Investigations, Policy, Probate (Guardianship) cases, relative approval. ICPC, pre-licensure HV for LCL, stand by, court worker, ICT courtesy home studies, scheduling and supervising visitations, and with Signs of Safety.

Previous Department

Some BASWs indicated they have worked in the county previous to working as child welfare social workers. The following table shows which county departments they came from for all the BASWs and for the IV-E participant BASWs. This may indicate that BASWs are recruited from within the county human services agency.

Distribution of BASW Social Workers, Supervisors, Managers, & Administrators by Service Assignment

	All BASWs	IV-E BASW Participants Only
Department	Frequency	Frequency
Adult Services	10	1
CALWORKS	9	3
Child welfare	20	7
Eligibility	14	2
Licensing	1	1
Mental health	5	1
Probation	3	0
Staff development/training	2	0
Total	64	15

Age & Years of Experience

Years of experience, or how long a worker has held a position, has worked in the field of child welfare or has worked in a county agency, are important stability factors in child welfare services, providing continuity of care to the families in the system and by inference, decreasing time in care.

For all professional respondents (case-carrying social workers, non-case-carrying social workers, trainers, supervisors, managers and administrators) the average tenure in the current position is 6.1 years; for time working at the county in any position it is 10.5 years; for time in the child welfare field it is 11.3 years. Average age and years of experience for all BASW staff in the child welfare system is less on average than that of the general child welfare staff population.

The first cohort of CalSWEC IV-E BASW students graduated in 2005 from three universities across the state. On all three measures below--years in current position, at the county, and in the field of child welfare--IV-E BASWs have fewer years of experience, but they are also statistically younger than the non-IV-E BASWs($t = -3.855$, d.f. = 180, $p = .000$).

Average Age & Years of Experience for non-IV-E BASWs: Comparing non-IV-E BASWs to IV-E BASWs

Average Number of years	Non IV-E BASWs	IV- E BASWs only
How many years have you been working in your CURRENT JOB?	6.9	3.6
How many years have you been working in ANY POSITION FOR THIS COUNTY?	11.6	5.6
How many years have you worked in the FIELD OF CHILD WELFARE (at any agency)?	12.4	6.0
What is your present age?	42.0	34.8

V. Education and Training

Training

California provides a Common Core Curriculum child welfare training for all newly hired child welfare workers. The Common Core is administered by the regional training academies <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/files/uploads/pdf/CalSWEC/counties.pdf> and the Interuniversity Consortium in Los Angeles. Seventy-five percent (75% of 156 respondents) have completed the Common Core training for child welfare workers; another 5.1% (n=8) are in the process of completing it; 18.6% (n = 39) say they either don't know about or have not completed the Common Core.

Eighty-nine percent (89% of 181 respondents) said they have received some training this year.

Desire for More Education

One hundred twenty-two (122) respondents with less than a baccalaureate degree want to obtain a BASW with CalSWEC support; 15 more want a BASW with LADCFS support.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the 186 responding BASWs indicated they want to pursue an MSW with CalSWEC Title IV-E support. In addition to CalSWEC's Title IV-E programs, the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (LADCFS) has its own one-year MSW Title IV-E program for county employees. Both CalSWEC and LADCFS have Title IV-E programs associated with universities in Los Angeles; 39 more want support for the MSW from LADCFS.

All Child Welfare Staff Respondents' Interest in Further Education 2012⁸

Current Ed Level	Want BASW			Want MSW		
	With CalSWEC	With LADCFS	No child welfare	With CalSWEC	With LADCFS	No child welfare
High School	12	0	3	3	0	0
AA	44	5	23	28	3	10
Some college	66	10	28	40	8	13
BA, BS	14	2	5	498	146	139
BASW	--	--	--	106	39	42
MA, MS	--	--	--	114	46	24
Total	136	17	59	789	242	228

⁸ They were allowed to indicate more than one choice.

In 2008, 159 child welfare staff indicated they would like to pursue a BASW degree with CalSWEC support. In 2011 the number has diminished somewhat to 106.

Challenges remain

In 2010 the CalSWEC Board's Workforce Development Committee took the BASW program evaluation under consideration. Challenges to county employee participation in the program include,

- Recruitment
 - Non-child welfare county employees may not be supported by their home departments because they will not return to their home departments upon graduation.
 - With the current economy, workers are not willing to quit their jobs to return to school.
- Academic issues
 - The lack of availability of general education classes in the community colleges.
 - Conflict between work and class schedules for part time students. (Source: CalSWEC Annual Report, 2010).

With respect to academic issues, the California legislature passed AB 868 (Pérez) in 2010 which requires "every community college district to develop and implement an online degree audit system to provide students and counselors the ability to monitor student progress toward completion of a degree, a certification, or the credits required to transfer to the California State University or the University of California." The intention is that this focus on articulation will help address the lack of class availability noted above.

The BASW schools are aware of the recruitment and academic issues and to address them, CalSWEC is planning to gather information about their experiences on the job from the BASW graduates in fiscal year 2012-2013.

VI. Appendix

Methodology

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 54 counties⁹ 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

⁹ 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.

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 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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