



Northern California Training Academy

Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Social Workers in Rural Communities

Literature Review



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Literature Review Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Social Workers in Rural Communities

Prepared for the Northern Directors Consortium
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The Center for Human Services
Recruitment, Retention of Rural Workers Literature Review
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**Summary of Research Examining Rural Social Workers:
Best Practices in Recruitment and Retention Strategies**

Specific Questions Explored in the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review was to identify what factors, if any, influence both recruitment and retention of rural social workers. There were three primary goals of this literature review: (a) to identify how rural social workers are employed (hired) (b) to identify what leads rural social workers to quit and (c) what are effective strategies to retain rural social workers. Additionally, this literature review sought to examine these three primary goals among rural child social workers (when the literature was available).

Purpose of Summary

The matrix below provides a summary of the relevant literature on the factors affecting recruitment and retention among rural social workers. It is organized by factors related to length of stay of workers, their social-emotional well-being, and individual factors, and effective strategies for having child care social workers remain (or social workers in general). Although this summary focuses on social workers working in rural communities, some of the literature also focuses on social workers in urban communities. This aids in understanding the uniqueness of working in a rural community as a social worker.

The matrix provides several pieces of information as a way to summarize the literature. For some findings, evidence-based programs are identified. These evidenced-based programs are then summarized by “general evidence”, which describes overall empirical support for the programs working to improve recruitment and retention of social workers working in both urban and rural communities. Moreover, key studies that provide findings on effective strategies in rural communities are described. (A reference list of these studies is provided at the end of the matrix.) The samples in these studies are also described. When available, the sample size, racial/ethnic representation, gender, community setting (i.e., urban or rural), and socio-economic status are provided. The literature review also includes those studies that conducted more rigorous outcome based academic research whereas others were descriptive and exploratory. Due to the extensive empirical research conducted among rural social workers living in Australia, this literature is also included.

Literature Review Sources

This summary is based on the following sources of information:

- Articles were searched using four different techniques:
 - Peer Reviewed Journal Databases using the keywords: “rural”, “social work,” “retention,” and “recruitment”: PsycLit (1970-2007), Sociological Abstracts (1970-2007), Sociological Review (1970-2007)
 - Reference sections of all included journal articles for additional relevant articles
 - Dissertation Abstracts, a major source of unpublished masters’ theses and dissertations
 - Relevant Websites: CWDA (website: <http://www.cwda.org/publications.htm>) & the Families and Children Resource Program (website: <http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/rural.htm>)

Summary

As research has clearly documented there are many recruitment and retention issues of health professionals, including social workers, living in rural communities. In fact, state administrators announced in 2006 that caseworker recruitment and retention is ranked as the number two problem in the United States child welfare system (USGAO, 2006). This is not surprising when looking at the existent literature and studies examining the reasons behind these recruitment and retention issues. There is a great body of research documenting that the contributing factors of these recruitment and retention issues include: lower pay/benefits, extended hours, lack of qualified job applicants – not educated or knowledgeable for how to work in rural communities, lack of adequate support, lack of resources and adequate equipment to sufficiently carry out work, and high community visibility. Due to these unfavorable conditions there is presently a problem of high staff turnover of rural social workers, which contributes to higher service delivery costs and lack of experienced practitioners (Lonne, 2001). However, while the empirical evidence is scant, there are current discussions for workable and possible effective strategies to alleviate these retention and recruitment issues of rural social workers.

One promising finding of the literature review is the available university resource presently addressing the issue of recruitment and retention of rural child care social workers (available in 2008). The Jordon Institute at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work is currently working on a project entitled, “Child Welfare Staff Recruitment and Retention: An Evidence-Based Training Model”. This project is currently developing resources to help public child welfare directors and supervisors recruit and retain viable and committed social workers. Though their resources are not specifically designed for rural social workers they do provide materials that can help in general recruitment and retention (at least in effective strategies). Furthermore some of these resources are being tested in rural communities. The resources include: “Staying Power!” videos, training modules, and toolkits. They also have a realistic job preview DVD that affords potential child care workers with a realistic view of the job. To receive more information contact “Child Welfare Staff Recruitment and Retention: An Evidence-Based Training Model,” Nancy Dickinson, Jordan Institute for Families, UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work, 301 Pittsboro St., CB #3550, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550.

To provide these recommended strategies in a user friendly format the following table summarizes the relevant literature into two different types of strategies for improving recruitment and retention among rural social workers: a) least expensive and b) more time intensive and initially more costly. However, it has been advocated that these strategies are most effective when executed with a “recruitment/retention plan” where a comprehensive focus is used and many different strategies are implemented to combat the long-term problem versus the immediate problems. Furthermore, while it is thought that financial incentives are the most robust method of recruiting and retaining rural social workers, the research finds that offering financial incentives helps with recruitment but not retention.

Recommendations from the Existing Literature: Effective Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Rural Social Workers

| Level of work and cost need to implement the strategies | Effective for Recruitment | Effective for Retention | Recommended Strategies | Cited in more than one report or research study |
|---|--|-------------------------|--|--|
| “Easy to Implement/ Less Costly” | <i>Yes/No</i> – can dissuade potential workers but is more cost effective and time efficient in the long run | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a realistic job preview of working in rural communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD (found to be effective in one study) • Have job applicant spend a day “on the job” to attain realistic expectations | <i>Yes (3 studies) – only one was a “true” intervention testing the effectiveness</i> |
| “Easy to Implement/Less Costly” | <i>Yes</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Present a “strength-based” perspective. This means not only providing the negative factors of working in a rural community as a social worker. Social worker educators and workshops need to also address the “positives” | <i>Yes (2 studies) – both were survey data</i> |
| “Easy to implement/Less Costly” | <i>No – not directly</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek “insider group status” - New professionals should be seen with someone important and trusted in the community ➤ Attend local community events | <i>Yes (3 studies) – way to garner trust in the community – self-report surveys</i> |
| “Easy to implement/Less costly” | <i>No – not directly</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Offer flex time/change office hours – not always the same | <i>Yes (3 studies) - highly effective in retaining workers</i> |
| “Somewhat timely, not expensive” | <i>No – not directly</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Caseload size related to turnover, but respondents who were allowed more time before acquiring a full caseload were much more likely to remain on the job than those given full caseloads quickly. [caseload size has a more adverse effect on job stress for new workers, but not social workers who have been on the job for longer than 6 months. | <i>Yes (2 studies) – one academically test – the other provided in self-report by rural social workers</i> |
| Level of work and cost need to implement the strategies | Effective for Recruitment | Effective for Retention | Recommended Strategies | Cited in more than one report or research study |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| “Somewhat timely, not expensive” | <i>Yes</i> | <i>Yes – “filter” out those who will not stay</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have potential job applicants fill out an “individual characteristics” survey that identifies important characteristics needed by rural social workers and found to improve retention: research finds that these characteristics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to working in rural communities/ Likes rural communities • High self-efficacy • Assess reasoning for wanting to work in child social work in a rural community specifically • Has previous experience working or living in rural communities | <i>Yes (5 studies) – these characteristics found to be influential for retention – some agencies have this as part of their standardized application process</i> |
| “More time intensive and costly” | <i>No – not directly</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide on the job training – found to be more effective than participating in standardized policy funded training | <i>Yes (3 studies) – social workers self-report of what was most useful and caused them to remain at their jobs</i> |
| “More time intensive and costly” | <i>No - not directly</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a “horizontal career path” – indexed by years of experience and salary levels, keeps qualified workers who are not at the supervising level. | No (study not that large and more of a suggestion (not rigorously studied)) |
| “More costly” | <i>No – not directly</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Offer pay-for-performance compensation as part of the salary | Yes (1) – found to increase retention, small sample |
| “More costly” | <i>Yes</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide educational incentives, loan repayment, or pay for current employees to attain higher levels of education (social workers with a Master’s degree tend to perform the job more effectively, are better prepared, and remain in rural settings for longer – if given appropriate supervision) | Yes (5 studies) – 3 of these tested the effect of education on retention |
| * Please note: “costly” refers to the initial cost of implementing these strategies. Some of these “costly” strategies may be more cost effective in the long term. However, no studies to date have evaluated the long term implications. | | | | |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Child Welfare Practitioners | Both Retention and Recruitment (also discusses urban communities) | Westbrook, Ellis, and Ellet (2006) – focus groups Asked questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how manage stay in child welfare, so many leaving • what organizational factors contribute to time you have been and stayed in the field • what personal factors contribute d? | <p>a. Role of Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carefully select support supervisors, can serve as role models • have a work climate this is “empowering” • recognize hard work, give personal appreciation • advocate for competitive salaries <p>b. Role of Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide early mentoring • provide “on-the-job” training <p>c. Hiring and Personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess motivation: caring, altruism, and commitment to families • Create a “horizontal career path” – indexed by years of experience and salary levels | Specifically, found that there are some characteristics of individuals that make them better suited for child welfare work: strong altruism, commitment, and caring | <p>a. Provide support to child welfare workers just entering the field from <u>experienced</u> supervisors and fellow workers</p> <p>b. Providing means of advancement that do not only include roles of supervision or administration – those who remain in direct services should be equitably compensated</p> <p>c. One of the most effective strategies for promoting retention is providing on the job training, more valuable than standardized policy-focused training</p> | <p>1. 21 child welfare employees (from CPS, intake, CPS ongoing, foster care, adoptions, foster home)</p> <p>2. 11 years, age (31-60+), 100% female,</p> <p>3. Most Caucasian, most BA or BS degree</p> |

| Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Retention, Recruitment, and Selection (urban and rural – but great emphasis on rural communities) | <p>2007 – to present “Child Welfare Staff Recruitment and Retention: An Evidence-Based Training Model” – UNC – Chapel Hill P.I. Nancy Dickinson, Jordon Institute for Families</p> <p>Jordon Institute for Families (2006).</p> <p>NC Association of County Directors of Social Services (2006)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff needs to feel that they have the appropriate skills to do the work • Agency needs to recognize and reward workers contributions • Workers need to have an accurate and realistic understanding of child welfare BEFORE accepting the position • Salary and benefits need to be reasonable <p>**Preliminary evidence suggests that having an integrated evidence-based training curricula can significantly improve recruitment, selection, and retaining competent child welfare staff.</p> <p>(this curriculum will be available in late 2008)</p> | <p>Attributes that matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a desire to help others • Have strong self-efficacy • Have higher levels of education | <p>a. Provide a “realistic job preview” – [they have developed a video: “Behind the Scenes” – 33 min]</p> <p>b. Appropriate and Effective Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving child welfare supervisors, directors, and trainers tools – having everyone on the same “page” <p>c. Provide ongoing consultation</p> | <p>1. 716 child welfare workers from 33 county departments of social workers</p> <p>2. Response rate of 49.5%, asked to state how likely to leave in the next 6 months</p> |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Child Welfare Practitioners | Retention (also discusses urban communities) | Weaver, Chang, & Gil de Gibaja (2006) Asked the following question: What individual, agency, and local economic factors predict worker turnover in public child welfare? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General job satisfaction strongly related to remaining on the job • Self-efficacy – personal motivation- associated with remaining on the job • High degree of role conflict was related to leaving the job • Presence of stressful job conditions was related to remaining on the job • Caseload size related to turnover, but respondents who were allowed more time before acquiring a full caseload were much more likely to remain on the job than those given full caseloads quickly. • Workers from densely populated counties were less likely to leave the job than workers from <i>rural</i> counties. <p>***Agency factors, have a greater effect on turnover than individual</p> | Individual Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latinos less likely to leave the job than African-Americans or Whites • Males more likely to leave than females • Workers with MSW less likely to leave than workers with other degrees • Age, work experience, having children, outside income, and having clinical license were not related to a worker leaving the job. | <p>a. Provide support to child welfare workers just entering the field from <u>experienced</u> supervisors and fellow workers</p> <p>b. Allow more time before giving new workers a full caseload – one of the most effective.</p> <p>c. Agency factors were more linked to worker turnover than any other factor, need to provide support!</p> | <p>1. 44 of 58 counties (very small counties did not participate)</p> <p>2. Subjects were all new public child welfare workers hired between 2000 – 2001</p> <p>3. Sent 1,700 surveys, but 657 workers returned surveys (response rate of 34%)</p> <p>4. 240 (37%) had left the job, (7% were fired), (11% transferred to other social service department in same county), (3% took similar positions in nearby counties), (5% moved out the area), (3% returned to school), (6% left for personal reasons)</p> |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General | Implications for Retention | Riebschleger (2007) Focus group: “What are your suggestions for engaging in effective social worker practice in rural areas?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to engage in on-going, rural community assessment: involves systematically assessing the communities strengths, challenges, and “vertical and horizontal structure” {For example, difficult to retain/recruit service providers b/c of globalization – large companies taking away small businesses and sense of community • Insufficient social and health services, so there is an insufficient formal social welfare network • Intersecting roles – difficult to have a private life as a rural social worker, “lack of anonymity” | Not Discussed | <p><u>a. Have social workers identify and use “abundant informal resources” in rural areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g., mutual aid, or “neighbors helping neighbors” • Need to be involved in the community <p><u>b. Know the history of rural communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have realist time frames for change efforts, change happens very slow • Many clients are connected and know one another, workers need to be sensitive to this <p><u>c. How to manage intersecting roles:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn connections among people • Extend friendliness in interactions • Arrange in advance with clients how they would like to handle contact in other settings | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small sample: 11 participants 2. Geographic diversity: within 10 different states, Midwest, South, West, Atlantic coast, and Northeast 3. Practice experience ranged from 6 months-35 years, mean of 25 years. 4. Seven had a master’s degree and four had a doctoral degree. 5. Six were women and 5 were men. |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|---|-----------|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General | Implications for Retention | Riebshleger (2007) CONTINUED | | Not Discussed | <p><u>d. Assist workers with traveling and give them a realistic picture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify existing organizational policies to assist with rural travel challenges • Increase use of technological connections (mail/chatrooms, telephone calls, interactive television linkages) • Provide realistic expectations – “expect to do a lot of driving!” <p><u>e. Provide more curriculum content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to practice in multidisciplinary teams • Define rural people as a diverse group • Provide field placements in rural areas <p><u>f. Seek insider group status:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New professionals should be seen with someone important and trusted in the community • Attend local community events | continued |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Child Social Work | Retention (both rural and urban communities, didn't really separate). | Ellis, Ellett, & DeWeaver (2007) Main Objectives: To identify if a measure of human caring is related to retention of public child care workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components of “human caring” are importantly predictive and related to retention of child social workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional commitment | <p>a. <u>Quality of the workforce is important for retention</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute pre-employment screening that include determination, persistence, and potential endurance <p>** University of Georgia is presently developing (with DCFS) empirically based child welfare employee selection procedures</p> <p>b. <u>Cites “model of human caring” – Noddings’s (2003)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors and administrators need to care about their workers for the workers to care about their clients – parallel process” | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sample of 786 child welfare workers engaged in direct services 2. Employees of Georgia State 3. Primarily female (88.8%), Caucasian (60.3%), African American (36.7%), most had a non-social work B.S. degree (59.4%). Only 23.3% had a social work degree. 4. 54.7% were between the ages of 20 and 35 5. 35.8% reported 2 or fewer years of employment with Division of Family and Children Services 6. Most had caseloads of 30 or more (73.6%) |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General, Case Managers | Retention (both rural and urban communities: a specific comparison) | Gellis, Kim, & Hwang (2004) Main Objectives: To understand differences between rural and urban social workers for how job stress impacts employee turnover, quality of life, and productivity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examined workers daily activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 92.6% reported spending their time in agency meetings, paperwork, and service/training planning ➢ 80.9% engaged in client working relationship, outreach/advocacy, crisis intervention, assessment of clients needs/strengths ➢ 42.6% psychoeducation, family education or consultation, and residential/other consultation Case managers in rural settings were more satisfied with their jobs than urban workers For both lack of organizational support strongly associated with higher job stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional commitment, a component of human caring is related to the decision to remain employed in public child welfare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Specifically, the items include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most days, I do not look forward to going to work - If I could do it all over again - I would choose a profession other than social work - I would continue to work in child welfare even if I did not need the money - When things are difficult at work - I can call upon memories of positive relationships with clients to keep me going - I cannot imagine enjoying a profession as much as social work - I genuinely enjoy my profession - I find little enthusiasm for working as a social worker. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide an agency mentorship program for new or younger case managers b. Provide job incentives and reward programs c. Provide onsite health/lifestyle workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 176 Case Managers completed mailed surveys 2. 56% women, 60% were married 3. Mean age = 38.49 years, average of 17 years of education, most had 6 years of job experience 4. 52% had a Bachelorette degree, 39% had a Master's degree, 9% had a high school diploma or an associates degree 5. 81% Caucasian, 33% reported they were thinking of leaving their jobs. |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General Health Practitioner | Retention (both rural and urban communities) | Graef, M.I., Potter, M.E., & Rohde, T.L. (in press) Main Objectives: To discuss methods that are related to successful recruitment strategies and tactics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for applications to receive “Realistic Job Previews” It is important to assess the costs of particular recruitment strategies in relation to the success of the outcomes they produce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess applicant’s reasons for wanting their positions – why social work, why child social work? | <p>a. Track job performance and turnover rates for those recruited through different approaches – determine the value of each strategy</p> <p>b. Find out how long it took for new hires to actually start – have “staff on call” that can handle caseloads</p> <p>c. Offer standardized and structured interviews – provide situational and behavioral descriptions</p> | A review and suggested tips from the literature |

| type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General Health Practitioner | Recruitment & Retention (both rural and urban communities) | Cyphers (2001) Main Objectives: To identify strategies to increase retention and recruitment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of 31 states that practiced early and aggressive recruitment at schools of social work, 28 found the practice “somewhat effective” and 4 found it “highly effective” • Around recruitment, 62% identified factors as “somewhat problematic” or “highly problematic”, only 38% not problematic • Recruitment strategies: most strategies were not implemented (63%) • “Softer” strategies prevent staff turnover most effective: increase in-service training, increase educational opportunities, increase/improve orientation, increase worker safety, flex time/change office hours, increase/improve supervisory training – all these rated more effective than efforts to raise salaries. • Increasing salaries and reducing caseloads were only rated as somewhat effective, these strategies • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase in-service training b. Increase educational opportunities c. Offer flex time/change office hours – not always the same d. Provide employee recognition and appreciation e. Offer flexible schedules so workers can seek social work education f. Offer pay-for-performance compensation as part of the salary <p>*Identifies strategies that require “softer” – little or new resources and those requiring a great deal of expense and resources</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Alliance for Children and Families in fall 2000 and CWLA mailed surveys to all state public child welfare agencies and sample of county agencies – total of 43 states (84%) completed the survey b. Mean operating budget (state) was \$285 billion |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General Health Practitioner | Recruitment (both rural and urban communities) | Whitaker, Reich, Reid, Williams, & Woodside (2004) Main Objectives: To identify strategies to increase retention. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with a degree in social work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tend to begin their work better prepared and stay in the field longer than those who do not -Feel safer making home visits alone -Spend less time on paperwork -Have enough opportunities for training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling safe making home visits (how to deal with aggressive children) Operating from a strengths perspective | a. Offer incentives for social work education b. Offer load forgiveness programs | 1. In 2003 NASW conducted a survey of 716 Child Welfare workers – consisted of 52 open and closed ended questions: received 534 responses 2. Median age = 41.1 years, 84% women, 75% had MSW degrees |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|--------------------|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General Health Practitioner | Recruitment (both rural and urban communities) | Mendel (2004) Main Objectives: Identify effective strategies for recruitment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the hiring process come from the local level rather than from a central office – local staff may be better able to provide a realistic picture of the work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>NA</u> | a. Hiring locally, without having to give civil tests and have a complex application process | County wide survey |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General Health Practitioner | Retention (both rural and urban communities) | Rycraft (1994) Main Objectives: Identify effective strategies retention. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the hiring process come from the local level rather than from a central office – local staff may be better able to provide a realistic picture of the work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify individual experiences in the agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important that employees feel a sense of connection and belonging at work Identify worker’s job stressors Important workers feel emotionally and physically safe. | a. Offer “stay” interviews, find out what keeps workers in their jobs, this operates from a strengths perspective, how can things change for the better? - e.g., Why did you choose to work in child welfare?, What is it about you and the way you do your job that keeps you motivated?, What are the reasons you stay in your current position, If you were to win the lottery and resign, what would you miss the most?, In your opinion, what are the primary reasons that employees leave your agency?, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Selected from a random sample of caseworker with at least 2 years of experience 61% social work degrees Valid N = 23, 6 with BSW |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: U.S. | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General Health Practitioner | Retention (RURAL focus) | Tate (1993) Main Objectives: Identify effective strategies for retention. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to have educated employees, in the long run “deprofessionalizing” positions leads to higher turnover, results in greater costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are important individual characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prior experience in child welfare ➤ Have completed a rural field practicum or were raised in the rural community ➤ Have connection into the rural community ➤ Desire to work in a rural community | a. Provide face-to-face realistic job previews b. For smaller offices in rural communities, there may be fewer advanced positions, so special benefits tailored to the individual may be more meaningful. c. Need to screen for individual characteristics needed for rural communities | Unable to locate study through interlibrary loan – study cited in another source. |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: Australia | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General, Case Managers | Retention | Sacco, M. (1994) Main Objectives: To examine attitudes toward living in rural areas, skills required by rural human services, and to identify the gaps in the skills of current staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who endorsed attitudes to leave were: isolation, having to travel great distances during the job, lack of a career path, having availability of work, a lack of resources, and lack of access to in-service training. Coursework lack relevance for doing social work in rural communities, and they had difficulty accessing reference materials Areas lack qualified social workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers have a “love of the rural lifestyle” | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase funding for support and supervision for isolated workers Provide opportunity for a tertiary degree Provide education and realistic expectations for working in rural communities Most receive education in 20’s, need to provide further education, on-the-job Provide new professionals with someone important and trusted in the community so these new workers can garner community acceptance. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 60 social workers, 37% were qualified nurses 26% were under the age of 35 88% were female |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: Australia | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General | Retention (comparison of rural social practice in United States and Australia) | Saltman, Gumpert, Allen-Kelly, & Zubrzycki (2004) Main Objectives: To compare findings from a descriptive study of rural practitioners in the U.S. and Australia. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% both samples considered their rural communities unique (with lack of resources and transportation being a common theme) • Almost all respondents responded that cultural information was important for their work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Slower pace of life, suspicion of outsiders, suspicion of government, pride in local history • 70% agreed special skills needed to work in a rural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have to fit into the local community ➤ Maintain credibility ➤ Cope with constant visibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to like rural communities and have an understanding of the local history | a. Provide an agency mentorship program for new or younger case managers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 420 questionnaires mailed, only 155 returned from U.S. 2. 147 questionnaires mailed, only 53 returned from Australia. 3. Mean age both groups, 41-50 (not young graduate) 4. Majority of sample was women – 76.8% in U.S. and 81.1% Australia. 4. In U.S. 16.8% held a high school diploma or A.A. degree |

| Type of Social Work | Retention Recruitment or Both | Source | General Evidence | Additional Influence (e.g., Individual Characteristics) | Suggested/Effective Strategies | Sample |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| RURAL COMMUNITIES: Australia | | | | | | |
| Social Work: General | Retention | Lonne & Cheers (2004) Main Objectives: To examine the complex factors affecting recruitment and retention of rural social workers and identifying the strategies to redress the high turnover of these workers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High turnover compounded by being able to recruit suitably trained and experienced staff • Workers living in the smallest communities perceived higher community acceptance and success in the job, but also had increased after-hours interruptions from clients • 39.7% left their positions within two years • Premature departure and poor retention primarily result of employer factors: lack of support and providing employer initiatives. • Community and individual characteristics related to increased stay in employment position | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fondness or liking for the rural community environment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage workers to be involved in the community and have moderate involvement with the community, but not too much. b. Encourage a positive view of rural communities, this enhances retention c. Provide more than 2 hours adjustment briefing for relocating employees enhances retention d. Better prepare rural social workers for rural and remote work, offer specific classes that discuss uniqueness of rural communities e. Monitor employee well-being to identify areas for assistance and support f. NOT use temporary tenure, is counterproductive g. Reduce after-hours work h. Provide regular administrative supervision, better access to training | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. N = 194 Australian social workers appointed in 1994 and 1994 2. Surveyed recently appointed social workers, completed second questionnaire when left the position or after two years 3. 75.6 % female, most under the age of 30 and not married 4. 25.1% had less than 2 years work experience |

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