Northern California Training Academy

Tools for Managers’ Excellence

A six to seven month professional development program for child welfare directors and managers

UC Davis Extension
CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES
CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
The Administration for Children and Families recently funded an extensive research study in the U.S.’ southern region. The goal of the Southern Region Quality Improvement Center study (with participation from 10 southern states) was to improve the child welfare system through the development of new strategies and implementation of evidence-based practices to better achieve organizational excellence. The study included program design, implementation and evaluation over a period of five years.

The University of Kentucky, as lead organization for the Southern Region QIC study, extended its additional resources to the Northern California Training Academy at UC Davis Extension to provide technical assistance and support in the design and development of a similar program for child welfare supervisors and managers. The Northern California Training Academy’s program builds on the body of work and evaluation developed from the Southern Region QIC study.

Tools for Managers’ Excellence

A six to seven month professional development program for child welfare directors and managers

Child welfare program directors and managers have a unique and integral role in creating effective and stable organizations. Directors and managers strive to successfully direct the availability and use of resources within the organization while concurrently leading organizational change to adapt to ever-changing political, cultural and economic environments. Within the current climate of change, directors and managers face unstable workforces, larger populations to serve and higher levels of accountability. Child welfare agencies have experienced increased demands both internally and externally. At the same time, the needs of families entering the child welfare system have become increasingly complex. Trying to impart effective child welfare practices while balancing community and stakeholder interests in fiscally insolvent times, directors and managers are tasked with mobilizing the agency to do more with less—all while inspiring new, more effective strategies for doing business with the goal of continuing to improve outcomes for children and families. This program will help directors and managers look at their role in assessing organizational dynamics, look at strategies for mobilizing change within the agency and share the pressures and demands of their own position in a supportive environment.

Program format

Tools for Managers’ Excellence is a comprehensive professional development program designed to provide support, skill building and networking opportunities for new and experienced directors and managers in child welfare. This program builds on the research, development and implementation model that supports leadership development in child welfare. Central to the program are the best-practice approaches that have proven to support directors and managers.

Cultural consensus approach

The program’s design uses the “cultural consensus” approach to learning in which the participants themselves determine the competencies that will benefit them most in their professional development. Through this approach, specific priorities and topics will be established based on the individual needs of the directors and managers participating in the program.

Learning labs

Training takes place in one- or two-day ‘learning lab’ sessions offered every six weeks throughout the year. Learning labs will include:

- Informative training on topics selected by the group
- Skill-building activities
- Networking and exchange of ideas among directors and managers
- A combination of classroom and online instruction will be considered
Learning reinforcement through mentoring

A field trainer will be assigned to each director or manager and serve as a coach to help directors and managers apply what they’ve learned in each of the learning labs. After each learning lab, a field trainer will schedule a visit to each participant’s site to review and reinforce new skills, answer questions and brainstorm specific implementation strategies.

360-degree evaluation

At the beginning and six months after the program, participants will perform a computerized evaluation to assess current strengths and continuing needs for professional development. This confidential tool will assist in the documentation of the director’s or manager’s own Personal Development Plan.

Goals and outcomes

As a result of this program, the combination of leadership development and field training assistance will enable directors and managers to:

- Evaluate their child welfare agency’s culture and ability to adapt
- Develop resources and manage finances in a collaborative era
- Mobilize the agency for organizational change and new ways of thinking and working
- Develop effective teams and manage conflict
- Plan for program development and management
- Evaluate programs for effectiveness
- Market the agency in public/community relations
- Manage human resource issues and staff development

Sessions for directors and administrators

When changing practices and work approaches within an organization—in an effort to move toward organizational excellence—professionals at all levels of the agency need to be involved and on board. To better understand what managers will learn in Tools for Managers’ Excellence, directors and administrators are invited to participate in portions of the program—separately and jointly with managers as topics allow. Directors and administrators can expect to meet two to three times during the year. Participation by directors and administrators will serve to support the program participant’s learning process, and it will help foster the implementation of adaptive management strategies.

For more information

Contact Grace Barajas at the Northern California Training Academy, (530) 757-8725 or email academy@ucde.ucdavis.edu or gbarajas@ucde.ucdavis.edu
Visit the website at www.humanservices.ucdavis.edu/academy for training dates and other information.
About the Northern California Training Academy

The Northern California Training Academy provides training, research, evaluation and consultation to child welfare professionals in 28 Northern California counties as well as its statewide agency partnerships. These include frontier, rural and urban counties with various training challenges for child welfare staff. With a focus on integrated training across disciplines, the Academy’s programs provide high-level competency in services for families and children. The Northern California Training Academy is funded by the California Department of Social Services.

About the Center for Human Services

The Center for Human Services at UC Davis Extension began more than 30 years ago as a partnership between the University of California, Davis and state government to address the needs of rural counties in developing skills for their social workers. Through professional training, consultation and research, the Center has grown to serve human services organizations and professionals throughout California and across the nation.