

**COUNCIL OF JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL
ADMINISTRATORS TOOLKIT:
Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining
Qualified Staff**

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This project offers training and technical assistance (TTA) to jurisdictions selected through the CCAS application process. Applicants approved for assistance will participate in a cohort of agencies beginning in early 2019. TTA will include access to subject matter experts through educational webinars and virtual trainings.

Workgroup Members:

- Michael Dempsey, Executive Director, CJCA
- Wendi Faulkner, Assistant Executive Director, CJCA
- Sharon Pette, CJCA Consultant / Lead Author (Effective System Innovations LLC [ESI]); www.rapidesi.com; sharon@rapidesi.com
- Teresa Abreu, former Deputy Executive Director, Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and CJCA Associate Member
- Jackie Chamberlain, Public Information Officer, Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services
- Margaret Chow-Menzer, Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance, Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS)
- Renee Jenkins, HR Recruitment Manager, Ohio Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS)
- Penny Sampson, Regional Director of Initiatives and Strategy, Rite of Passage and CJCA Associate Member

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Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
639 Granite Street, Suite 112 | Braintree, MA 02184 | Tel: 781-843-2663 | Fax: 781-843-1688

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INTRODUCTION: TOOLKIT PURPOSE, GOALS, AND STRUCTURE

Purpose

During the past two decades, the issue of hiring and retaining juvenile justice staff has received increased attention. As the body of evidence-based research has grown, juvenile justice agencies throughout the nation have embraced a reformative approach to working with youthful offenders. Although data show the positive impact of using research-proven treatment approaches, employing such approaches has created challenges with hiring and retaining qualified and competent staff. Traditionally, the role of a “juvenile correctional officer” was solely to maintain safety and security and control the population. More recently, the role of a juvenile direct care staff worker has shifted to that of a “counselor” who leads youth in developing skills through role modeling and mentoring. Many jurisdictions require direct care staff to engage with youth using a strengths-based approach and techniques such as therapeutic coaching, interactive supervision, and supportive skill development. As such, juvenile justice facilities must seek individuals who possess a unique skill set and whose personality characteristics and qualifications can foster healthy coping, living, and relationship skills. Many agencies find themselves asking: *How do we find qualified staff? How do we know potential candidates will be a good fit for our agency/facility? How do we retain these staff members long term?*

Staff recruitment, hiring, and retention are complex issues that must be closely examined. Finding staff who are a good fit for the agency/facility and determining what motivates staff to stay in their positions are key areas for exploration. Research has shown that these components have a costly impact on facility culture, financial resources, and youth outcomes. More specifically:

- **Staff departures increase the risk of serious incidents.** Vacancies can lead to a reduced staff-to-youth ratio and increase the risk of youth and staff injuries.
- **High staff turnover increases stress on direct care staff.** High staff turnover leads to frequent use of mandatory overtime, as supervisors attempt to cover critical vacancies (e.g., mandatory posted positions). Regular use of mandatory overtime promotes staff burnout, which can reduce staff’s ability to engage with youth and increase the likelihood staff will leave their positions.
- **Decreased therapeutic interactions result in less-than-desired youth outcomes and failure to achieve the agency mission.** Much of the “treatment” in a juvenile justice facility setting

occurs in the context of daily staff interactions with youth. The staff-to-youth relationship is a vital component in helping youth achieve their goals. Operating with less than adequate staffing levels or a facility using mostly temporary staff to cover vacancies can dilute the therapeutic nature of the staff-to-youth interaction. Consequently, high staff turnover can jeopardize an agency's ability to achieve its mission and positively impact the lives of the youth it serves.

- **Staff turnover is financially costly.** High staff turnover forces an agency to cope with unanticipated expenses such as overtime costs, workers compensation claims, and legal fees that result from an increased number of serious incidents. In addition, hiring staff is a significant resource investment (e.g., training, coaching, uniforms), and losing even one direct care staff can cost an agency thousands of dollars.

Goals

This toolkit aims to provide juvenile justice facilities with specific strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining direct care staff. The toolkit provides examples, templates, and tools that may be used to improve current practices and, ultimately, to select and retain qualified staff. Specifically, the toolkit aims to:

- share literature on best practices for recruiting and retaining direct care staff;
- explore factors contributing to staff retention and turnover;
- provide specific strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining competent staff; and
- offer a series of steps to consider within each section.

This toolkit is not intended to be an all-encompassing solution or “magic bullet.” Rather, it serves as an introductory guide to assist juvenile justice agencies in stabilizing their direct care workforce. The Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) has drawn from the research in a variety of social service settings (e.g., adult prisons, adult jails, juvenile justice agencies, and child welfare organizations) to guide readers in developing a detailed plan for improving hiring and retention practices to reflect individual facility needs and requirements.

Structure

Although the issue of hiring and retaining qualified staff impacts all positions, this toolkit focuses on direct care staff to allow for a more comprehensive discussion of each workforce development area. In addition, research supports that one of the most challenging issues facing juvenile justice agencies today is hiring and retaining quality frontline staff. Work environment stressors and safety concerns play a significant role in high staff turnover rates and, therefore, are discussed in detail throughout this manual.

This toolkit consists of nine interrelated sections. It is important to understand that the greatest likelihood of success will come from strategically addressing each of the identified toolkit components. These components include:

- Background
- Agency and Facility Culture
- Recruiting and Hiring Staff
- Staff Retention
- The Role of Staff Wellness and Safety
- Succession Planning and Leadership Development
- Impact of Labor Unions
- Using Data to Drive Change
- Getting Started

Examples of forms, surveys, and other tools used by juvenile justice agencies throughout the country are provided for reference in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#), which can be accessed throughout the document.

The toolkit is designed for readers to use the sections of most relevance to their facility's need. Above all, the authors hope readers gain valuable insight that enhances current practices related to building and sustaining a qualified workforce.

BACKGROUND

Research Literature

Many social service sectors (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, health care) have struggled with hiring and retaining adequate qualified staff. In recent years, juvenile justice agencies throughout the country have increased attention and resources to examine and solve the issue of high staff turnover. At the core of this issue, three main questions arise:

- How do organizations hire qualified staff who are dedicated to the youth they serve?
- What factors influence staff retention?
- What are effective strategies for ensuring direct care staff remain with the agency?

Research studies have estimated turnover among direct care staff in juvenile justice facilities to be between 20% and 25% per year (Minor, Wells, Angel, & Matz, 2011; Wright, 1993, as cited in Mikytuck & Cleary, 2016). One study found that “approximately a quarter of newly hired staff resigned from state-operated juvenile correctional facilities within the first year of being hired and trained” (Minor, Wells, Angel, & Matz, 2011, as cited in Wells, Minor, Lambert, & Tilley, 2016, p. 1558).

It comes as no surprise that high staff turnover easily becomes a financial burden for an agency and the larger system. Studies have estimated that when an employee exits, it costs an average of \$31,000 per exiting employee resulting from resources needed for recruiting, training, and onboarding new staff (Minor et al., 2011). Costs are likely significantly higher for juvenile justice agencies because of the role of juvenile justice direct care staff, including teaching skills, leading groups, coaching, and using de-escalation tactics. These staff skills require specialized training and ongoing coaching for new staff to become proficient, which are costly.

High turnover rates present more than negative fiscal impacts. Finn (2000, as cited in Mikytuck & Cleary, 2016) explains that a pattern of repeated turnover begins a cycle of decreased staff morale, which leads to diminished productivity. This scenario translates to decreased staff engagement with youth. In addition, high turnover rates in juvenile justice facilities create safety risks born from leaving new direct care staff, who are not yet proficient in handling significant events, to fend for themselves. Wells et al. (2016) encapsulate the negative impact of turnover:

Turnover can undermine effectiveness by creating personnel shortages, causing existing staff to be overworked, hampering staff morale, destabilizing daily operations, and

hurting the agency's public image.... Resources expended in response to turnover (e.g., processing separations, paying overtime to cover vacancies, training new staff, etc.) and turnover intent (e.g., picking up slack for employees who want or plan to leave) are resources that cannot be devoted to either (a) programming and services to promote offender betterment or (b) improvements in pay, benefits, and work conditions that might better control staff turnover. (p. 1559)

Further, staff engagement can be greatly impacted by turnover. Research shows voluntary turnover is more common than involuntary turnover in corrections. In addition, voluntary turnover is more costly and disruptive to an organization because voluntary turnover tends to claim higher performing employees (Blakely & Bumphus, 2004; Price, 1977; and Wright, 1993; as cited in Wells et al., 2016). Although research is mixed as to whether a person's intent to leave predicts actual turnover, Lambert (2001, as cited in Wells et al., 2016) cautions that intent to leave is often linked with lower productivity and psychological withdrawal from the job. Crabtree (2005, as cited in Stinchcomb, McCampbell, & Leip, 2009) explains employee engagement by grouping employees into three categories:

1. **“Engaged Employees** work with passion and feel a profound connection to their workplace. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.
2. **Not Engaged Employees** are essentially ‘checked out.’ They are sleepwalking through the workday, putting time—but not energy or passion—into their work.
3. **Actively Disengaged Employees** aren't just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish” (p. 76).

Research suggests that *employee disengagement* may be costlier than staff turnover. According to one Gallup research poll, “Actively disengaged employees cost the American economy over \$300 billion per year in lost productivity, absences, illnesses, and related problems” (Crabtree, 2005, as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009, p. 76). The urgency for establishing effective processes for hiring and retaining qualified staff is clear.

Importantly, voluntary turnover can be influenced. The professional relationship between employer and employee does not typically end suddenly; rather, it dissolves over time.

For many years, employees may endure frustrating conditions that predispose them toward thinking about leaving—long before some emotional event triggers their departure. Employee turnover often reflects a gradual disengagement process that plays out over weeks, months, or even years. Frustrated employees who feel unheard

by and uncommitted to their employer will inevitably “talk with their feet”—if they have a choice. (Stinchcomb et al., 2009, p. 75)

If agencies can identify and understand the factors that contribute to why employees stay or leave, then they can intervene early and increase staff retention. The subsequent pages of this toolkit explore root causes for voluntary exits and provide specific strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining competent and committed staff.

AGENCY AND FACILITY CULTURE

Groysberg, Lee, Price, and Cheng (2018) define culture as the “tacit social order of an organization” and explain that culture influences attitudes and behaviors. The authors uphold that cultural norms define what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within a group and that “when properly aligned with personal value, drives and needs, can unleash tremendous amounts of energy.” As such, agency and facility work environments have a tremendous impact on job satisfaction and staff retention. Establishing and maintaining a collaborative, caring, and stable work environment that supports creativity are critical pieces to agency success.

The good news is that culture can be created or changed. A work environment supported by positive caring staff who work collaboratively can contribute to lower turnover rates. The challenge for many agencies is not the *will* to change but rather *how* to change the culture. When an agency or facility experiences problems related to its culture, leadership must be willing to take bold steps to reshape the attitudes and beliefs of their workforce. Change requires patience, persistence, and resources from leadership to achieve a healthy culture—one in which staff respect leadership; feel empowered to make decisions; rely on their colleagues; are committed to the agency mission; and care about the youth they serve.

Senior leadership must begin culture change by ensuring all staff understand and embrace the agency’s mission and core values. To be successful, the agency should develop a comprehensive plan that includes a solid communication strategy for the initial launch and ongoing implementation. Consistent communication can be achieved through town hall meetings, weekly or monthly communication from the director, frequent site

REMINDER:

The most successful initiatives are guided by a well-informed, comprehensive, strategic action plan. The plan should include specific activities, methods of frequent communication, quality assurance measures, and sustainability activities. A formal action plan to address culture change or staff recruitment and retention will ensure the greatest likelihood of success in achieving the desired outcomes.

visits from agency administrators, and agency/facility newsletters. The goal of the culture change strategy is for staff at all levels and across all disciplines to understand (a) why the change is necessary and the impact it will have and (b) how their daily work contributes directly and indirectly to the agency's overarching mission and key goals. Leaders must "walk the talk," be genuine, and model respect and transparency. Facility leaders must understand the significant impact effective leadership and positive culture/work environment have on staff retention.

According to Groysberg et al. (2018), leadership can employ these four "levers" to influence culture:

1. Use high-level principles and trends to inspire and help staff understand the need for change.
2. Select and develop leaders who align with the culture.
3. Use organizational conversations about culture to underscore the importance of change. Leaders can facilitate conversations through on-site visits, listening tours, structured group discussions, and social media.
4. Reinforce the desired change through organizational design such as performance appraisals and trainings.

Agencies most successful in increasing staff retention share common characteristics. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) outline these principles as:

- "close alignment between the agency's mission/vision and its management practices;
- consistent, two-way communication between management and line staff;
- fair, value-driven policies, procedures, and decision-making practices;
- clear expectations and objective performance measures;
- opportunities for growth and development;
- employee integration through participatory management;
- personalized, publicly-expressed recognition and appreciation;
- quality-oriented, caring supervisors; and
- an organizational culture that values mutually supportive teamwork, inspiring a sense of 'family' as well as professional pride" (p. 77).

Similarly, Denhof, Spinaris, and Morton (2014) include the following components as reflective of a healthy culture and work environment:

- friendly and supportive forms of interaction among staff members;
- respectful communications between coworkers, and between higher and lower ranking staff;
- respectful interactions between staff and justice-involved individuals;
- reliable, consistent, and principled decision making and follow-through; and
- disciplined and exemplary role modeling by leadership.

Agencies should consider these factors when developing a culture-change strategy. More information about creating a healthy culture can be found in the Creating a Healthy Work Environment section of this toolkit.

Gathering Data on Agency Culture

To shift the culture and shape a positive work environment, leaders must closely examine the specific symptoms of a weakened culture and begin to identify root causes. To begin, jurisdictions should consider conducting an organizational readiness to change assessment. Data from this assessment allow the agency to determine whether it has the necessary structures to support a shift in culture. One example is the “Organizational Change Worksheet” by the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA; Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, 2017, pp. 30–32). The assessment includes statements such as:

- “the organization has a clearly defined vision/values and these are clearly communicated throughout the organization;
- executive leadership in the organization have the means to implement a shift in culture;
- executive leadership will actively and visibly participate with the project team throughout the entire change process;
- leaders are able to motivate employees to ‘buy-in’ and manage resistance, when necessary; and
- mechanisms are in place to identify lapses in effective communication.”

In addition to an initial readiness assessment, OYA has developed an innovative approach to monitoring the work environment. Every 3 months, designated staff conduct “Quarterly Conversations” with staff and youth. The Quarterly Conversation is an organizational transformation process that fosters self-reflection, encourages meaningful discussion, and drives an agency toward excellence. Using structured questions, a designated staff member from another facility or an agency administrator meets with facility staff and youth to gather information about current program performance in five domains: Safety and Security; Caring and Supportive Relationships; High Expectations and Accountability; Meaningful Participation; and Community Connection. Quarterly Conversations allow team members to identify areas of

success, areas of focus, priorities, and strategies for improvement. More information about the Quarterly Conversation is provided in the 2017 [CJCA Toolkit: Positive Youth Development](#).

Gathering data from exit, stay, and culture surveys can help identify elements contributing to a negative culture and high staff turnover. Because staff satisfaction with their supervisor is an influential factor in staff retention, some jurisdictions have found assessing management and personality styles to be helpful in providing information about team dynamics and staff needs (e.g., communication style, recognition preference). Data also can provide insight and dispel myths or false perceptions. For example, tracking and analyzing significant incidents (e.g., time of day, day of the week, area of the facility, staff and youth involved) allows facilities to develop solutions and create a safer environment for staff and youth. Data can be compared with staff perceptions of safety, which may or may not match. By identifying indicators that impact agency culture and measuring key areas, leaders can make data-driven decisions that shift staff beliefs and support an evolving culture.

Data collection systems such as Performance-based Standards (PbS) can assist agencies in monitoring factors influencing staff retention. [PbS](#) is a national continuous self-improvement program developed by CJCA to address conditions of confinement and the quality of facility life. PbS offers two staff surveys (a climate survey and a trauma-informed survey) that allow facilities to monitor critical elements influencing staff retention. PbS data show that in addition to staff and youth perceptions of safety, staff perceptions of how well they are trained and supported contribute significantly to rates of safety problems.

For the purposes of maintaining the scope of this toolkit, a brief description of exit, stay, and culture surveys is provided below for reference. Examples of these surveys can be found in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

Culture Climate Surveys

Administering culture climate surveys is one way to gather information about organizational commitment and staff satisfaction. These surveys provide information regarding the degree to which the stated agency/facility mission aligns with workforce beliefs and behaviors. Climate surveys aim to assess staff and client satisfaction and, ultimately, measure those factors' influence on an agency's success, including staff retention. Areas addressed often include whether leadership is trusted, honest, or respected; whether staff feel comfortable sharing their opinions; whether staff feel supported in their path of professional growth; whether staff feel empowered to make decisions; and whether staff feel they have the tools to effectively perform their job duties.

The Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections (IDJC) and OYA both use culture climate surveys on an annual basis. These surveys use a series of statements across several categories, such as Agency Mission and Values, Work Experience, Employee Morale, Agency Management, Communication, and Overall Satisfaction. Staff are asked to respond to each statement using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. To increase survey completion rates, IDJC offers an incentive—staff members who complete the survey are entered in a drawing for one of three \$20 gift cards. IDJC reports these incentives have positively influenced survey completion rates.

Following are example questions to assist jurisdictions in developing a culture climate survey. To have the greatest impact, jurisdictions should develop survey questions that reflect their unique agency/facility needs, priorities, and work environments.

Culture climate survey questions selected from IDJC and OYA:

- I have a clear understanding of what <agency name> is trying to achieve.
- I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills at <agency name>.
- Motivation and morale in my area are high.
- I am confident that <agency name> will be successful in its mission.
- We invest in developing our employees and maintaining competent and qualified staff.
- Management explains the reasons behind important decisions that impact my job.
- My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.
- I enjoy the company of my coworkers.
- Someone at work has thanked or acknowledged me for doing a good job within the past 7 days.
- I am involved in decisions that affect my work.
- I receive the training I need to keep me safe at work.
- I feel physically safe in my workplace.
- My supervisor gives me the support I need to do my job well.
- I trust agency leadership.
- Managers are held accountable for their behavior.
- The information I receive is valuable.
- The information I receive is believable.
- The information I receive is timely.

Stay Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups

Conducting surveys, interviews, and focus groups with existing staff are effective methods for gathering “real-time” data about agency culture. Interviews or focus groups led by human resources, communications, or research staff also can provide valuable information about issues and staff perceptions about agency leadership. These convenings highlight staff ideas on how to empower staff, increase morale, and decrease staff turnover.

Similarly, stay surveys provide useful information about agency/facility culture and staff retention. Online surveys make it easy for staff to participate and for researchers to aggregate data. The survey format has the benefit of keeping staff responses anonymous, which may allay staff concerns about retaliation and prompt them to respond truthfully. If an agency chooses to use an online survey format, it is recommended that, at a minimum, survey respondents report their position classification/title to allow the agency to analyze data across job titles and generate solutions to target root causes for each group of staff (Exhibit 1).

Jurisdictions may find gathering anonymous information from new hires valuable. IDJC surveys new employees about their experience during the hiring and onboarding process and how they are adjusting to their new role. These surveys are administered 3 to 4 months from the day of hire. IDJC uses this information to adjust the hiring process and address potential issues early on, thereby positively impacting staff retention.

Exhibit 1. Ohio Department of Youth Services Sample Stay Interview Questions

General	When you travel to work each day, what things do you look forward to?
	What parts of your job are the most enjoyable...or even the most fun?
	What parts are most challenging?
	What are you learning here? What do you want to learn?
	How do you like working with other members of our team?
	Why did you decide to stay?
Employee Needs	Are there specific reasons you can think of that could cause you to leave us?
	Do you feel that you are part of a bigger vision and mission? Why or why not?
	Do you believe that your work has meaning? How can we work together to make your work more meaningful?
	What type of feedback would you like to receive about your performance that you are not receiving now?

Do you feel that you have the necessary control over your job to perform most successfully and productively?

Is the organization providing you with opportunities to grow and develop as a person and as a professional? What would improve your opportunities?

Are you treated respectfully by your coworkers?

Do you respect the amount and kind of leadership that you receive from the senior managers?

Some agencies hire consultants or a third party to evaluate the agency/facility culture. Having independent evaluators may be less threatening to staff and allow staff to be more open. In addition, hiring external evaluators may send a message to staff that agency leadership is invested in real culture change.

Exit Surveys and Interviews

Exit surveys and interviews may provide some information about staff perceptions, although they are the least valuable among the strategies mentioned in this toolkit. Collecting information from employees who will soon leave or have left an agency will have little impact on agency/facility culture and staff retention because these data are “after the fact” and do not allow the agency to course-correct in a timely manner. Conversely, collecting real-time data through culture climate or stay surveys allows an agency/facility to quickly address issues and maintain a positive work environment. Still, information from exit surveys and interviews can provide useful information about the work culture, day-to-day concerns, and issues around management styles, workplace ethics, and employee morale.

Examples of exit survey questions used by IDJC are provided for reference here.

- What caused you to start looking for a job outside of this agency?
- What one thing would have retained you as an employee at <agency name>?
- How satisfied were you with each of the following (using a Likert scale)?
 - job training for your unique position;
 - access to training and development opportunities;
 - communication with your immediate supervisor;
 - communication with others in the department; and
 - culture of support for all staff to develop and reach their potential.

- What would you recommend helping <agency name> improve the workplace?
- What was missing in the area of resources and support necessary to accomplish your job?
- How well did your immediate supervisor do the following (using a Likert scale)?
 - communication on department rules, policies, procedures, and other issue/decisions affecting staff;
 - welcomed staff input and suggestions;
 - showed appreciation/recognition for work contributions;
 - developed cooperation and collaboration within the team;
 - provided clear goals and expectations; and
 - provided coaching and mentoring.
- How satisfied were you with each of the following (using a Likert scale)?
 - Rate of pay? Paid vacation? Paid sick days? Paid holidays? Medical insurance? Retirement plan? Tuition reimbursement?

Using Data to Drive Culture Change

Regardless of which strategies a jurisdiction employs, it is critical that the agency uphold its commitment to use the data collected. If the agency gathers information and does not clearly communicate and demonstrate efforts to make system improvements based on staff input, the efforts will reinforce negative beliefs/aspects of the culture.

After a cultural assessment has been conducted and analyzed, leaders should develop a formal implementation plan detailing specific steps for each of the prioritized culture change strategies. The plan should include action items, target dates, person(s) responsible, outcomes, and status/progress. It is recommended that this plan be developed by staff across disciplines and include input from direct care staff. Giving staff a significant role in creating a healthy work environment increases the sense of purpose and connection to the agency's mission (organizational commitment), decreases resistance to change, and likely improves job satisfaction.

To ensure the greatest likelihood of success, the agency should designate an individual to manage the initiative. This designee is responsible for monitoring the status of action items, helping to remove barriers, and keeping top administrators informed of progress and challenges. Although implementation plans must be comprehensive, it also is important that agency leaders prioritize action items and focus on strategic, quickly attainable priorities (“quick wins”) during the initial phases of implementation. Implementing quick wins can have a high

impact on the issue and will serve as evidence of leadership’s commitment to making improvements based on staff feedback. Momentum and trust are essential for long-term, more complex action steps.

Regular and frequent communication is critical to shifting the mindset of individuals and shifting organizational culture. As such, the implementation plan should include a formal communication strategy and involve various methods for messaging important information, such as:

- weekly electronic memos from the agency director or facility superintendent;
- a short video describing the change strategy and how it relates to the agency mission;
- a monthly newsletter detailing accomplishments; and
- a standing agenda item on weekly or monthly all-staff meetings.

Regular and open communication creates an atmosphere of transparency, reinforces a team approach, and builds trust in leadership. Therefore, it is critical that agencies have a formal implementation plan for culture change that includes a robust communication strategy that extends the life of the initiative and beyond.

Creating a Healthy Work Environment

Changing culture takes time and requires involvement from staff at all levels. In addition to frequent communication with staff, creating a healthy culture requires facility leaders to demonstrate genuine care and respect for staff and youth. Modeling these behaviors will trickle down and positively influence how staff treat colleagues, youth, and families. Research shows job satisfaction influences a person’s decision to stay or leave. Individuals who are not happy at work will undermine the agency’s mission through unhealthy behaviors. Disgruntled or dissatisfied direct care staff will inevitably impact their peers and create an unhealthy work environment. Therefore, agency/facility leaders should create an open, supportive, and solution-focused environment rather than one driven by fault finding and placing blame.

How the agency’s mission is operationalized can be a powerful factor influencing staff retention. It is important that staff clearly see how their daily work contributes to the agency’s overall mission/purpose, as this will impact staff’s overall organizational commitment and job satisfaction. An organization that has a healthy culture will draw in potential employees. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) explain:

Just as becoming known as a “good place to work” is appealing to job applicants, it is likewise a source of personal and professional pride for employees to be affiliated with

such an organization. From pursuing a common vision to participating in positive activities, strong interpersonal relationships create the kind of team that everyone wants to play on. With mutual concern for everyone's well-being, the bonds are forged that can convert a place to earn a living into a place to establish a lifelong commitment. (p. 86)

As part of creating a healthy culture and work environment, leaders must be visible and regularly interact with direct care staff. Regular facility site visits by executive team members and daily interactions by facility/program leadership should include acknowledging staff for behaviors and attitudes that promote the agency's mission and promote positive outcomes for youth. Praise reinforces desired behaviors and attitudes and promotes a solution-focused work environment.

As previously mentioned, leaders promote a healthy culture by being open, transparent, and following through with their commitments. This approach earns the trust and respect of staff. Leaders must address concerns in a timely manner and reach back out to staff to ensure the concern has been resolved to their satisfaction. Follow-through also applies when a serious incident has occurred (e.g., youth-on-staff assault). Having leaders reach out to staff as soon as possible after a significant event promotes an atmosphere of care and concern and provides an opportunity for leaders to acknowledge how staff effectively handled a difficult situation. Communication of this nature creates an environment of coaching and constant quality improvement that results in a positive work environment.

Staff retention strategies can be aligned with other organizational culture changes, such as institution of trauma-informed or safety models. One study of a Pennsylvania facility for girls found that implementation of the Sanctuary Model (a model promoting institutional safety) met its intended goals of reducing the use of restraints, assaults of staff, and of youth reporting fearing for their safety, as well as reducing staff turnover. Specifically, the percentage of staff positions coming vacant over a 1-year period decreased from 97% in 2008 to 17% in 2012, just 2 years after implementation (Elwyn, Esaki, & Smith, 2015, as cited in Elwyn, Esaki, & Smith, 2017). Study results found implementing the Sanctuary Model significantly impacted the organization's culture and staff turnover. Positive impacts included staff reporting a greater sense of safety, teamwork, accountability among staff and youth, stronger staff-supervisor relations, more positive attitudes and environment, greater connection to the organization's goals, and improved staff-to-youth relations. Staff also reported feeling a shift from a negative, chaotic, dangerous environment to a culture of openness, social responsibility, and focus on safety and positivity.

The Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services has witnessed positive results from creating a Staff Wellness Committee. The committee consists of staff at all levels and disciplines and convenes monthly. The purpose of the committee is to provide information and tools to support, encourage, and promote wellness in staff. During these meetings, committee members discuss issues, challenges, and ideas to foster a healthy work environment. Example agenda topics include culture climate survey results; managing stress; time management; certified yoga instruction; and nutrition and weight loss. It is suggested that agencies enact a formal policy to guide the committee's work as doing so will ensure that the committee's purpose and expectations are clear and, ultimately, increase the committee's productivity.

In summary, creating a healthy culture requires continuous efforts on behalf of all leaders and staff. Leaders must be genuinely committed and lead by example. In addition, it is critical that staff are kept informed of the positive impacts/outcomes of their daily work with youth. Identifying measures associated with a healthy culture (e.g., work attendance/absenteeism, use of overtime) and regularly monitoring outcomes will further ensure agencies successfully create a positive work environment. It is important to share data with direct care staff as they provide an opportunity to recognize staff contributions and successes. In addition, seeing the positive impact of change efforts will influence job satisfaction, staff engagement, and staff's commitment to the agency mission.

RECRUITING AND HIRING STAFF

Staff retention begins with recruitment. According to research, selecting individuals who are a good fit with the organization's mission can have far-reaching effects within the agency. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) explain:

Recruiting applicants who are a good fit with the organizational mission is likely to have a positive impact on retention, which in turn, ultimately produces greater organizational stability, thereby enabling career development and succession planning to occur in a more orderly manner. Moreover, the impact is reciprocal. That is, the ability to retain high-quality employees through sound management practices and to develop the type of caring, supportive organizational culture where people want to work also makes it easier to successfully recruit topnotch talent. (p. 12)

Because recruitment has a significant impact on staff retention and organizational stability, agencies must devote adequate resources to create a comprehensive recruitment strategy. This requires formal action planning, creating specific recruitment and retention goals, and regularly tracking progress. Using measures and data allows agencies to determine areas for improvement and anticipate vacancies well in advance.

Recruitment Mode/Framework

The goal of recruitment is to hire the most qualified individual whose beliefs align with the agency/facility mission and who will stay with the organization. According to the [Human Resources Management Handbook](#) (2018), recruitment involves designing specific job vacancies, designing an appealing recruitment announcement, and offering a competitive package to the winning candidate. In addition, a successful recruiting process requires (a) a complete and accurate job description; (b) a hiring process that keeps applicants engaged and encouraged; and (c) employee retention strategies that ensure quality staff want to stay.

This toolkit organizes the recruitment and hiring process into four main stages—job analysis and competency development (understanding what you need); sourcing talent (recruitment); assessing talent (screening/selection); and engaging talent (hiring/onboarding). Short descriptions of these stages are provided here.

Job Analysis and Competency Development

The initial step in the job analysis phase is determining whether the direct care staff job title accurately reflects the position’s job duties and the agency mission. Because juvenile justice focuses on strengths-based approaches to working with youth, the job title should reflect this treatment-oriented approach. In recent years, many jurisdictions have moved away from titles that emphasize a security and control mindset such as “Juvenile Corrections Officer” and toward titles that emphasize reformation such as “Youth Development Specialist,” “Juvenile Rehabilitation Counselor,” or “Juvenile Support Specialist.” Agencies are encouraged to closely examine the current job title to ensure it aligns with its mission, expectations, and daily job duties.

Prior to posting a position, the agency must determine the type of person sought. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) describe critical job skill sets as “core competencies” and define these as the *“measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities...staff need to fulfill the...[agency/facility’s] mission”* (p. 24). To attract the best fit for a position, facilities should develop core competencies, ensure job descriptions are up-to-date, and include the agency’s mission in the job description. Core competencies should be emphasized in the job announcement and throughout the recruiting and interviewing process. This approach will help to ensure applicants’ values align with those of the agency.

Clark (2014) suggests jurisdictions consider the following job functions when developing or revising direct care staff job descriptions, as they emphasize a strength-based, trauma-informed approach to working with juvenile justice youth.

- **Behavioral Management.** Effectively using positive reinforcement and, when necessary, natural consequences with all youth.
- **Crisis Intervention.** Using a trauma-informed lens to prevent or minimize physical and emotional harm to residents in various crisis situations.
- **Safety and Security.** Effectively supervising residents and employing knowledge and skills related to safety and emergency situations (e.g., contraband, first aid, CPR, fire safety).
- **Custodial Care.** Assisting in the proper identification and treatment of problems related to the physical and emotional health and well-being of youth using knowledge and skills in various areas (e.g., medical and hygiene, adolescent sexuality, substance abuse, physical or emotional abuse, symptoms of suicidal behavior and emotional distress).
- **Recordkeeping/Report Writing.** Providing accurate and timely written documentation of situations and program activities through observation and recording skills.
- **Program Maintenance.** Implementing, teaching, creating, and supplementing the facility's daily program and activities (e.g., physical education, recreation, arts and crafts).
- **Problem Solving.** Creating an environment in which a youth's personal, social, or emotional problems can be openly discussed, explored, and possibly resolved through effectively using interpersonal relationship skills, communication and consultation with clinical staff, and leadership in group discussions or activities.
- **Organizational Awareness.** Understanding, supporting, and using the philosophy, goals, values, policies, and procedures that represent the daily operations of the facility.
- **External Awareness.** Identifying and periodically reviewing key external issues and trends likely to affect the agency (e.g., legal, political, demographic, philosophical trends).

Sourcing Talent (Recruitment)



The foremost recruitment issue is not how to fill vacancies. Rather, it is how to identify and attract the types of employees who will best advance the organization's mission."

—Stinchcomb et al., 2009, p. 7

In today's competitive environment, agencies must use a range of effective recruitment strategies and platforms to attract qualified employees. Common external recruitment strategies include newspapers, online classified advertisements, and career fairs. Although these traditional methods may lead to an influx of applications, applicants are often not

qualified for the advertised position. Therefore, agencies must expand their recruitment strategies beyond traditional methods. Additional recruitment strategies offered by Clark (2014) are included here.

- Advertise through professional or national associations such as CJCA and American Corrections Association (ACA). This type of advertising is usually free and connects to a target audience.
- Inform employees of existing vacancies and encourage them to become “recruiters.” Employees know the job and what it requires and can explain the job to potential applicants. Staff who are committed to the organization will generally only refer people they believe are a good fit.
- Create job postings using social and electronic media advertising. Sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Indeed, and CareerBuilder can be good sources for attracting millennials (those born between 1980 and 1994).
- Work with local media to spotlight the positive work of staff. Newspaper and television news coverage can assist in “putting a face on the facility.” In addition, some newspapers offer dual web and print posting to attract online job seekers.
- Work with local colleges and universities to post vacancies on job boards.
- Host an open house where members of the community and potential job seekers can tour the facility, learn about the history, and better understand the role of the facility in the local community. This will help dispel myths about what occurs in a juvenile justice facility.
- Create an internship program to draw students from various social services. Interns and volunteers often become desirable job applicants, as they know the exact requirements of the job.
- Create a list or pool of qualified applications and résumés from former applicants. A past candidate may be a better fit for a future or different position within the organization.

Staying organized and ensuring that the agency is actively pursuing recruitment opportunities is a critical piece of recruitment success. Jurisdictions may find it helpful to create a recruitment calendar displaying various activities throughout the year. This approach ensures the person/division primarily responsible for recruitment remains active throughout the year and on target for meeting recruitment goals.

Agencies should spend time researching free resources within their communities and state that can help with the recruitment process. For example, the City of New York has Workforce One Centers operated by NYC Small Business Services that assist child welfare and juvenile justice providers who serve youth in recruiting new staff. National partnership opportunities also

should be explored. For example, CJCA members can request that CJCA send job announcements through its e-mail distribution list composed of more than 58 states and counties and nearly 75 affiliate members. Establishing a relationship with local and national resources allows agencies to maximize their search for qualified candidates.

Other strategies to consider include:

- Speak at local colleges and universities about careers in juvenile justice (and how they differ from the adult correctional environment).
- Provide incentives for employees who refer friends and family (resulting in employment), which has shown to be effective for some agencies. Ideas for incentives include gift cards, movie tickets, a special parking spot, an extra vacation day, and so on. Some agencies compensate staff financially for successful referrals.
- Explore the use of social media. In Pennsylvania, the Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services is working to increase its use of social media platforms for hiring. If an agency cannot afford advertising on national websites, they might consider collaborating with other local agencies to share the cost.

Some jurisdictions also may find the following strategies helpful:

- Run continuous job announcements in multiple formats.
- Hold prehire activities on the weekends so that individuals who are currently employed can attend.
- Conduct prehire activities in conjunction with other processes to prevent delays.
- Encourage former staff members to return to work part time.

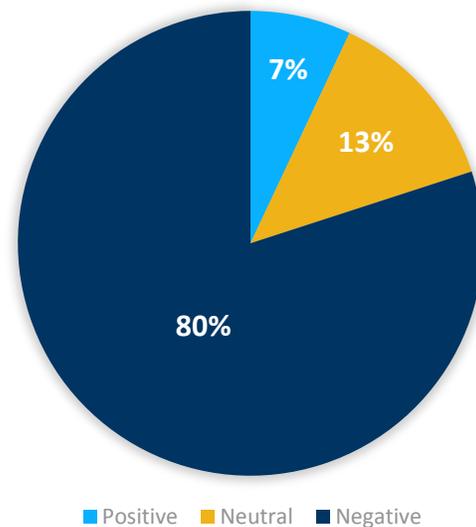
On a final note, agencies must consider dedicating fiscal resources (budget line item) for recruiting activities. Doing so will hold the agency accountable for determining how effective each recruitment strategy is and the impact on the agency's workforce. Regardless of approach, recruitment plans must be ongoing and include a variety of strategies that cast a broad, yet targeted, net.

The Importance of Branding

“Branding” is an important recruitment and marketing tool that allows an agency to demonstrate its unique and attractive attributes. The goal of branding is to declare to the local community, stakeholders, staff, and potential employees who the agency is as an entity and the values driving their work. An agency’s brand should be displayed on all agency materials, including those used for recruitment. More specifically, the logo, mission, values, and goals of the department should be on all documents, publications, legislative reports, outgoing e-mails, and various areas of the agency’s website.

Many facilities take a “no news is good news” approach to interactions with the media. Consequently, facilities are only publicized when negative incidents occur. This approach is damaging to a facility’s image and the image of juvenile justice and corrections as a whole, as Exhibit 2 shows. Branding can have a positive impact on current and potential employees. Branding can provide employees with additional information that deepens their understanding and appreciation for what the agency does, thus helping them determine if they fit the agency’s culture. Current employees can use marketing materials to recruit better candidates, reduce hiring and marketing costs, and improve productivity (Cubukcu, 2018).

Exhibit 2. Analysis of Articles From Major U.S. Newspapers’ Portrayal of Corrections Officers and Jobs



Source. Vickovic, Griffin, & Fradella, 2013.

Data show that using the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) framework to recruit top candidates in the field may be helpful as part of a branding strategy (Murdock, 2018). EVP provides a framework that explains why candidates would want to work for the organization. EVP highlights the competitive strengths of a position and separates it from other similar roles offered elsewhere. The key elements of the EVP framework (Murdock, 2018) include:

1. **Tangible rewards**—Applicants want information about the compensation package, paid time off, paid medical leave, and other allowances such as prepaid highway toll tags, which add to the overall value of the compensation package.
2. **The opportunity**—Candidates need to understand the benefits of the career path and the organizational structure (e.g., career ladder, promotion opportunities).

3. **The organization**—People want to work for organizations of which they can be proud. Agencies should highlight how the juvenile justice system impacts the lives of youth.
4. **The people**—Potential employees want to know with whom they will work and what makes the employees a team.
5. **The work**—Candidates need to understand the activities in a typical workday.

What's in a Generation?

Although some common components are effective in attracting the “right fit” for organizations (as previously described), research indicates that generational differences exist regarding what lures or attracts employees to an organization. According to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data conducted by [Pew Research Center](#), more than one in three American workers today are millennials (adults ages 21 to 36 in 2017). Millennials constitute the largest generation in the U.S. labor force (Fry, 2018). As such, it is important to understand what motivates these individuals. According to research, millennials seek out work that has meaning and tend to value connections with coworkers (Taylor, 2013). A publication by the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School (2014) offers insight into the differences between Generation X, millennials, and Generation Z. A summary of generation characteristics is provided here.

Generation X staff (born between 1965 and 1979):

- are straightforward and appreciate a “hands-off” management approach;
- want ongoing training and seek growth opportunities, even if those opportunities are lateral;
- are results-oriented and desire flexibility in how work is accomplished; and
- strive for a work-life balance and are willing to work less to achieve this balance.

Millennials (born between 1980 and 1994)

- grew up with 24/7 access to the Internet, which shapes the way these individuals search for information, solve problems, and communicate;
- are prone to change jobs frequently to find the job that best suits them;
- are goal and achievement oriented and value social and corporate responsibility;
- are good team players, optimistic, and value constant feedback;
- value work with meaning (part of an agency’s mission) rather than a large salary; and
- expect a work-life balance and to work when and where they want.

Generation Z (born 1995 and later)

- want to have an impact on the world and the impact may be more important than their jobs; and
- are more technologically connected than millennials.

Stinchcomb et al. (2009) offer additional information about potential generational differences in the workplace. These are highlighted in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3. Generational Differences in the Workplace

Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979)	Millennials (born between 1980 and 1994)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire work-life balance—family and friends are higher priority than job • Avoid working overtime on a regular basis • Value independence • Value competence over rank • Desire to make operational improvements (which may cause conflict with others who value organizational tradition) • Seek regular feedback and coaching • Hold many various jobs throughout their careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are optimistic and ambitious • Consider family and friends their top priority • Are team oriented and prefer working in groups • Have high self-esteem and are good at multi-tasking • Expect structure in the workplace and to have access to sophisticated technology when doing their work • Actively seek feedback from coaches/mentors to help fulfill their aspirations and often move quickly up the organizational ranks • Acknowledge and respect positions and titles and want a relationship with their boss; this does not always mesh with Generation X’s love of independence and a hands-off style

To create a diverse multigenerational workforce, agencies must target their recruitment efforts based on the demographics they seek. Agencies should conduct analyses specific to their agency, including past, present, and projected data related to vacancies, characteristics of the existing labor pool, processing time, applicant success rates, and so on (Stinchcomb et al., 2009). Stinchcomb et al. (2009) highlight considerations that agencies should use when recruiting Generation Xer and millennial direct care staff. These are provided in Exhibit 4 for reference. Additional resources, including a checklist of steps to improving staff recruitment, are provided in the Stinchcomb et al. (2009) article in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

Exhibit 4. Considerations When Recruiting Across Generations

Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979)	Millennials (born between 1980 and 1994)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the unique aspects of the organization and the job • Highlight leadership’s openness to dialogue and discussion (but only if it is true) • Emphasize technology • Point to opportunities for training and career advancement • Identify opportunities for personal growth and development • Show how the job can make a difference in their community • Emphasize the balance between work and life (e.g., 12-hour shifts) • Highlight wellness and fitness programs • Have Gen Xers ready to talk to applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve parents • Emphasize technology • Highlight teamwork • Emphasize the balance between work and life (e.g., 12-hour shifts) • Highlight leadership’s openness to dialogue and discussion (but only if it is true) • Emphasize training, career advancement opportunities, and mentoring

Individuals born 1995 or later are considered part of the “postmillennial” generation, also known as Generation Z. Although many similarities exist with their millennial counterparts, according to Fisher (2016), agencies should emphasize the following when recruiting Generation Z staff:

- how the agency’s day-to-day work contributes to the larger world;
- benefits that matter in the short term (those they can use in the next few years—e.g., paid parental leave); and
- how the agency will develop a career path unique to staff based on individual strengths and interests.

According to Beall (2016), “Many employers are predicting that more teens, between the ages of 16 and 18 will go straight into the workforce, opting out of the traditional route of higher education, and instead finishing school online, if at all.” Therefore, to entice candidates to come on board as direct care staff, it is critical that agencies develop structures to support direct care staff in achieving their career goals in juvenile justice. Beall (2016) also explains that Generation Z members have higher expectations than millennials, think globally, and expect diversity. Agencies may carefully consider these unique characteristics and determine effective ways to meet the needs of these individuals.

Assessing Talent (Screening/Selection)

The “Assessing Talent” phase can be broken down into two main components: Initial Screen and Interviews (phone or face-to-face).

The Initial Screen

Adopting an effective, standardized screening process allows jurisdictions to quickly identify whether individuals possess the core competencies and qualifications necessary to the job. Ultimately, using a screening process reduces the number of candidates interviewed, thereby decreasing the amount of time staff must dedicate to participating on interview panels. This results in a significant resource/cost savings.

In addition to the standard screening activities such as drug testing, criminal background checks, child abuse registry check, driving record check, and past job performances (e.g., disciplinary actions or terminations resulting from substantiated allegations of sexual harassment or abuse), many juvenile justice agencies have adopted computerized assessments to screen applicants prior to offering an interview. These computerized assessments evaluate specific personality traits and beliefs that align with the field of juvenile justice. Examples of screening and assessment tools are provided here.

The Diana Screen is an easy-to-use computer-based, prehire/volunteer risk management screen that helps protect youth from sexual abuse and sexual boundary violations. Scientifically validated, The Diana Screen asks a series of questions that identify applicants who fail to recognize sexual boundaries between adults and children. The Diana Screen also helps identify those applicants who pose a higher risk for sexually victimizing youth.

The Ergometrics IMPACT Juvenile Correction Officer Test is a video-based pre-employment screening tool in which candidates respond to 33 real-life job scenarios, including encounters with juveniles, supervisors, and fellow officers. The exam measures a candidate’s tendency to respond aggressively to juvenile behaviors; level of professional boundaries; appropriate use of rewards; power/control tendencies; ability to assist youth in learning from their experiences; level of team engagement; and ability to recognize youth behavior patterns. The state of Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services uses the IMPACT test and has found it useful in screening out applicants who would not be a good fit for the agency.

In recent years, research has highlighted the prevalence of sexual victimization of youth in custody by staff or volunteers (almost 8%; Beck, Cantor, Hartge, & Smith, 2013). The National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC) is a juvenile-based data collection tool of the National Prison Rape Statistics Program developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The NSYC gathers sexual assault incident data for juvenile facilities as required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. To ensure youth are safe while in custody, agencies also must consider risk for sexual perpetration when screening potential candidates.

Interviews

Many juvenile justice agencies use a two-interview screening process. The first interview is often a phone interview led by a single individual or a panel of current staff members. The second interview is usually conducted in person (or remotely using video conferencing technology). Second interviews can be conducted by a panel of staff members who interview candidates separately or several applicants simultaneously.

Regardless of format, the initial interview should be viewed as an opportunity to ensure the applicant understands the nature of the work. During the initial interview, interview panelists should clearly explain the agency's mission, vision, core values, the approach to working with juvenile offenders, day-to-day activities, and specific job duties. Several juvenile justice facilities have found it helpful to conduct guided tours on the day of the initial or second round interview to allow candidates to see the residential living space. Having direct care staff lead these tours allows candidates to ask detailed questions related to the job and establish a connection with current staff members. Others use a team of youth leaders and staff to conduct tours. This provides an opportunity to observe candidates' direct interaction with youth. Some jurisdictions have also adopted the practice of conducting interviews on the facility living unit so potential employees can observe program activities and staff-to-youth interactions. Observations and information gathered from a facility tour or interviews on the living unit may assist candidates in determining whether they feel they are a good fit for the work environment.

Although the interview process can be resource intensive, it is important that agencies recognize the value of conducting these interviews. Individuals participating on the interview panel must be reminded that they are helping decide which individuals will be an asset and carry out the agency's mission. The perspective that serving as a panelist is a unique opportunity and privilege will shape the impression of the interviewee. First impressions are lasting; therefore, interview panelists must show up with an open mind and be ready to ascertain who is the best fit.

The interview process is intended to gather information about the candidate's belief system (e.g., youth are villains, victims, or resources) and whether these beliefs align with the agency mission and values. Interview questions should be focused on highlighting the applicant's



A study of video testing using the Correctional Officer Video Test (COVT) by Ergometrics for the North Carolina Department of Corrections found reductions in turnover and sick-leave use (Spurlin & Swander, 1998). Using a small sample in Oregon, a similar study of the COVT found a turnover reduction of 73 percent and a drop in sick leave use of 50 percent. A follow-up study in Kansas, after a year of COVT use found turnover down 6 to 32 percent. The report recommends further research into the linkage between the screening and reductions in turnover and leave usage (Spurlin & Swander, 1998)."

—Nink, 2005

personality traits, capacity to handle unexpected events, and flexibility. Clark (2014) offers a list of individual characteristics for agencies to consider when developing interview questions and selecting qualified direct care staff:

- **“Balanced perspective.** A broad view that balances present needs and long-term considerations.
- **Strategic view.** Ability to collect and analyze information that forms an overall long-range view of priorities and forecasts likely needs, problems, and opportunities.
- **Environmental sensitivity.** Awareness of broad environmental trends and the effects of these trends on the work unit.
- **Leadership.** An ability and willingness to lead and manage others.
- **Flexibility.** Openness to new information as well as tolerance for stress and ambiguity in the work situation.
- **Action orientation.** Decisiveness, calculated risk taking, and a drive to get things done.
- **Results focus.** Strong concern for goal achievement and a tenacity to follow a project through to completion.
- **Communication.** Ability to express oneself clearly and authoritatively and to listen attentively to others.
- **Interpersonal sensitivity.** Self-knowledge, awareness of the impact of self on others, sensitivity to the needs and weaknesses of others, and the ability to sympathize with the viewpoints of others.
- **Technical competence.** Expert and up-to-date knowledge of the methods and procedures of the work unit.”

Competency-Based Behavior Interviewing



Staff who are underqualified or inadequately trained could be more likely to engage in inappropriate behavior, underperform, or leave because they lack engagement.”

—Russo, Woods, Drake, & Jackson, 2018, p. 4

To further assess whether applicants are a good fit, many juvenile justice agencies have adopted competency-based behavior interviews. Competency-based behavior interviews differ from traditional interviews in that they use scenarios to elicit information about how a potential candidate will respond to a specific situation. Competency-based behavior interviews allow agencies to assess whether the job applicant has the knowledge and competency to perform the job as it relates to a juvenile justice setting.

Research has shown that behavior-based interviewing correlates with successful job performance. In a detailed analysis conducted by Zwell and Michael (2000), behavior interviews showed a strong correlation with job performance ($r = .48-.61$). On the contrary, traditional interviews were shown to have a significantly low correlation ($r = .05-.19$) with staff performance. Exhibit 5 provides additional details regarding the type of assessment method used to screen applicants and future job performance.

The goal of behavior-based interviews is to uncover whether the applicant has the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and other attributes to effectively respond to the reality of the job. This is accomplished by asking a series of questions that gather information about how the candidate handled situations in the past. Traditionally, hiring decisions are based on an applicant's education and prior work experience. Although education and work experience are important considerations, the information on which a facility is making its hiring decisions is incomplete. Assessing other important attributes such as behavior and desired skills fills in the gaps and enhances the chances a new hire will fit the specific competencies identified for the position.

The Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (MA DYS) uses competency-based behavior interviews as part of its staff selection process. MA DYS has developed a "Competency Library" containing 40 competencies associated with various types of work within the Massachusetts juvenile justice system. Competencies are selected based on which qualities are needed to successfully perform each position. MA DYS has three levels of direct care staff working in its juvenile justice facilities—Group Worker I (an entry-level position); Group Worker II (a supervisory position); and Group Worker III (facility administrator—top supervisory position in

Exhibit 5. Correlations Between Assessment Methods and Job Performance

Assessment Method	Correlation (r factor) ^a
Assessment Centers	.65
Behavioral Interviews	.48–.61
Modern Personality Tests	.39
References	.23
Traditional Interviews	.05–.19

^a Correlations range from 0 to 1. A higher correlation (closer to 1) indicates a strong relationship. An r score closer to 0 indicates there is little or no influence between the assessment method and job performance.

facility). Exhibit 6 shows which competencies are associated with each MA DYS Group Worker. The full “MA DYS Competency Library” can be found in [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

Exhibit 6. MA DYS Group Worker Competencies

Group Worker I Competencies	Group Worker II and III Competencies
Action oriented	Action oriented
Adaptability	Adaptability
Applied learning	Applied learning
Building trust	Building trust
Communication	Communication
Conflict management	Conflict management
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Customer/client focus	Customer/client focus
Decision making/problem solving	Decision making/problem solving
Initiative	Delegating responsibility
Safety awareness	Safety awareness
Stress tolerance	Stress tolerance
Teamwork	Team leadership

After the facility has established a set of competencies for a specific job title/position, the facility must decide which competencies to focus on during the interview. One method is to separate those competencies that can be readily taught on the job, such as communication and teamwork, from those competencies that are more intrinsic to an individual (e.g., adaptability and stress tolerance). Another approach may be to select competencies that are essential to the facility’s values, such as customer/client focus and building trust.

The behavior-based interviewing format uses questions that ask the job applicant to describe a specific competency-related situation from a past work or life experience. In addition to the traits previously offered by Clark (2014) and by MA DYS, agencies may consider gathering information about whether candidates:

- work well under pressure;
- understand the importance of being fair and consistent with incentives and consequences;

- bring a strength-based approach to working with juvenile offenders;
- understand basic adolescent brain development and the impact of trauma;
- effectively interact with youth who have behavioral or mental health challenges;
- are available to work seven (7) days a week; to work overtime with short notice; or to work nights, weekends, or holidays;
- understand they may be exposed to youth who are hostile and sometimes dangerous; and
- are comfortable with conducting strip searches, supervising showers, cleaning up bodily fluids, and physically restraining youth as a last resort (when provided proper training).

Exhibit 7 provides examples of interview questions related to competencies selected from the MA DYS Competency Library. Although these questions provide a structure, jurisdictions should develop competencies based on their unique needs and job responsibilities. MA DYS scores applicant's responses using a Likert scale: (1) No evidence of proficiency, (2) Marginal proficiency, (3) Proficient, (4) Exceeds, or (5) Greatly Exceeds. This information is documented by interview panelists using MA DYS templates.

Exhibit 7. MA DYS Competency Library Example Interview Questions

Competency Area	Competency/Attribute	Interview Questions
Conflict Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses appropriate interpersonal styles and techniques to reduce tension or conflict between two or more people • Able to assess situations quickly • Able to identify common interests • Facilitates resolution 	<p>Tell me about a time when you dealt with or worked closely with a difficult or angry person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the circumstances? • How did you handle it? • What was the result?
Building Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with others in a way that gives them confidence in one's motives and representation, and those of the organization • Is viewed as direct and truthful • Maintains confidentiality and keeps promises and commitments 	<p>Share with us a situation at work when you gained the trust of a coworker who initially resisted your efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the circumstances. • What did you do? • What was the result?
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participates and contributes as a member of a team to achieve team goals • Works cooperatively with other team members • Involves others • Shares information, as appropriate • Shares credit for team accomplishments 	<p>Tell us about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours. Tell me more about the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What exactly did you do? • How did this turn out? • What other challenges did you encounter? • What did you do to address those challenges?

Consistency by the hiring manager and interview panelists is important in behavior-based interviews. Interviewers must ask the same questions of every applicant, using the same wording, in the same order, and using the same rating system. Using standardized questions ensures an accurate comparison and ensures job applicants are evaluated fairly. Ideally, the same hiring manager or interview panelists would conduct all interviews for a single position to further ensure consistency in ratings.

Of final note, competency-based behavior interviews are different from traditional approaches. Thus, the hiring manager and interview panelists should be trained in the structured interview process, including how to ask behavior-based questions and pose follow-up questions. Competency-based behavior interviewing is a time-tested methodology for improving hiring results. For it to be an effective selection tool, a facility must be prepared to commit the time and effort necessary for planning, training, and successful implementation within the organization.

Engaging Talent (Hiring/Onboarding)

The final phase of the Recruitment process is Engaging Talent. According to the Aberdeen Group (Willyerd, 2012), “86% of new hires decide to stay or leave a company within their first six months and new employees are 69% more likely to stay longer than three years if they experience well-structured onboarding” (p. 1). Russo et al. (2018) define onboarding as “processes to acclimate new staff to the organization and initial job training to prepare them for their new duties” (p. 3).

The American Management Association has identified three key factors, related to hiring/onboarding, that may contribute to an applicant’s willingness to work with an agency (Tate, 2000, as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009). These are:

- lack of feedback on application status;
- next step in the process is unclear; and
- process is too complicated and cumbersome.

Many organizations require extensive background checks and have lengthy job hiring practices. It is critical that agencies have a clear and efficient process for hiring and onboarding new staff to minimize the time between application submission, testing/screening, and onboarding. An efficient process will help prevent candidates from losing interest. Ongoing communication with applicants is critical. One approach to consider is an online system, where applicants can periodically check the status of their application. This process also may include having a current staff member available to answer applicant questions and “sell” the benefits of working in the juvenile justice field. Maintaining contact with priority candidates will help establish a human connection with the agency and increase the likelihood of securing target candidates. Facilities also may consider partnering with other juvenile justice facilities through common application and information management systems. Russo et al. (2018) explain that this allows applicants to submit one application that can reach multiple agencies and, ultimately, allows budget-constrained facilities to share resources and deepen their talent pool. It also may allow screening and testing processes to transfer, given screenings meet all facilities’ policies.



TIP

The State of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (PA BJJS) uses a direct care trainee program. This program allows PA BJJS to recruit and hire candidates who may not meet all qualifications. After trainees complete the program, they are promoted into an entry-level direct care position. Similarly, the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections has a 6- to 12-month Rehabilitation Technician Trainee program that trains candidates who may not meet the agency’s experience requirements. These training programs open a new pool of potential hires who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to pursue a career in juvenile justice.

Agencies should ask themselves three questions during the onboarding process:

1. How do we welcome new employees?
2. What is the training and orientation process?
3. How do managers provide support to staff?

Minor et al. (2011) examined the predictive factors influencing early job turnover in direct care staff in the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice. The study included 475 staff across 13 cohorts of individuals who had completed the training academy. Researchers found “of staff who resigned, 61.3% did so within the first 6 months of graduation. Over 87% of the resignations took place in the first 9 months after graduation” (Minor et al., 2011, p. 66). Researchers also found the median time for resignation to be 140 days (less than 5 months). These findings provide evidence that creating a supportive environment for new staff, particularly in the first year of employment, is critical to retention. Agencies may consider creating a formal mentoring program in which a designated veteran maintains contact with a new employee during the first year. The mentor assists the new staff in navigating job responsibilities and answers questions.

As previously mentioned, research indicates feeling connected to coworkers is an important factor influencing job satisfaction and, consequently, retention. Willyerd (2012) suggests creating an online community for new hires. The author explains that this forum allows “new hires to connect, post pictures or videos, talk about hobbies, get tips and hints from recent hires already in the company, and form connections with dozens of people” (p. 2) before their first day. Willyerd further explains creating this community is a mechanism for housing “the collective intelligence of hundreds of people gathered over time, allowing a rich repository of knowledge for the new hires to access—acronym wikis, collaborative documents, project status updates” (p. 2).

A person’s first few days can have a strong influence on how the new employee perceives the work environment. Agencies should create an inviting climate. Quick strategies for promoting a welcoming culture include sending a memo to all staff with pictures and short biographies of new staff members and encouraging veteran staff to introduce themselves to new team members. Jurisdictions should ask staff for their ideas on how best to welcome new team members.

Onboarding and Basic Training

ACA Juvenile Corrections Training Standards, Juvenile Caseworker Training (4-JCF-6E-08) require 40 hours for new employee orientation and 120 hours of training within the first year of employment (Clark, 2014). Training topics include security procedures, suicide prevention,

use of force, report writing, communication skills, rights and responsibilities of juveniles, supervision of youthful offenders, interpersonal relations, code of ethics, and sexual abuse/assault, among others.

Onboarding training is essential for direct care staff. New employees are expected to model positive behavior and help youth develop coping, social, and life skills while maintaining the safety and security of the facility. New staff are charged with delivering rehabilitative services while learning the various policies and procedures governing the facility's administration and operations. In addition, many jurisdictions train new employees on other juvenile justice–related topics such as adolescent brain development, positive youth development, and trauma-informed care. Basic training provides the foundation for new employees to acquire the skills and knowledge to perform their job and promotes a deeper understanding of the legal, clinical, and security implications of their actions.

All juvenile justice agencies provide some type of basic training to new employees, although the length and content varies widely. For the purposes of discussion, this toolkit categorizes new direct care staff training into four categories:

1. **Juvenile Justice Overview:** Agency mission and values, characteristics of juvenile justice–involved youth, trauma-informed care, positive youth development, adolescent brain development, and standards of conduct
2. **Staff and Youth Relations:** The Prison Rape Elimination Act; gang awareness; firearms, youth and staff interactions; conflict resolution; stress management/staff wellness; and confidentiality
3. **Facility Operations and Management:** Searches, contraband, client count and movement, use of force, room confinement, fire safety, hostage response, and group disturbances
4. **Facility Programming and Operations:** Clinical and health services, behavior management, de-escalation, alternatives to isolation, trauma-informed approaches, CPR and first aid, and documentation

Some agencies structure new employee training as pretraining that must be completed before working with youth. Other jurisdictions split the modules into segments and allow new staff the opportunity to observe/shadow veteran staff between the modules. For example, the MA DYS new employee training includes 1 week of classroom training; a second week that includes 4 days of on-the-job training and 1 day in the classroom; and a third week of classroom training that includes a debrief of the on-the-job training modules. This approach provides staff with the basic knowledge and skills to perform their duties while also providing an opportunity for staff to observe and apply concepts. Requiring a final week in the classroom following the on-site experience allows new employees to integrate the information learned into their daily work.

As previously mentioned, mentoring programs can build upon new hire training by providing support and connections to peers and enhancing chances of a new hire becoming a long-term, proficient team member.

The most valuable resource of a juvenile justice facility is a skilled and committed workforce. To ensure staff remain equipped to effectively provide rehabilitation services, promote facility safety, and stay current on best practices, most juvenile justice agencies/facilities require direct care staff to complete ongoing trainings provided through annual mandatory in-service training. These trainings may focus on agency policies and refresh staff on critical areas such as de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed care, adolescent brain development, and the agency mission and values. Although ongoing training requires significant resources, agencies should recognize the significant impact ongoing training has on a staff member's confidence. Ultimately, feeling competent influences whether a staff member will stay with the agency.

Recruiting and Hiring Senior-Level Leaders

Although this toolkit focuses on direct care staff, it is important to mention recruitment and hiring of senior-level positions (e.g., facility superintendent, assistant superintendent, executive director). Senior-level staff members are responsible for serving youth, supporting and retaining staff, and leading culture change within the organization. Although recruiting for direct care staff is challenging, finding qualified managers and executive team members may present an even greater challenge. Because this topic is “out of scope” and only briefly discussed in this toolkit, the authors encourage readers to gather additional information about recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality senior-level leaders. Two resources to consider are:

- [National Institute of Corrections publication, *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century: Executives and Senior-Level Leaders* \(2005\)](#)
- [National Institute of Corrections publication, *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century: Manager and Supervisor Levels* \(2006\)](#)

The publications identify nine categories or sets of competencies for senior-level leaders. These include self-awareness; ethics and values; vision and mission; strategic thinking; managing the external environment; power and influence; strategic planning and performance management; collaboration; and team building (Clark, 2014). These resources outline characteristics of effective leaders and provide valuable information regarding key skills and behaviors needed to be a successful leader. This information may assist agencies in developing competency-based behavior questions to use when interviewing senior leadership candidates.

Jurisdictions should consider creating a diverse hiring panel, including members from various disciplines, when selecting senior-level staff members. Panelists may include a youth advocacy

member, court system administrator, high-level human resources employee, and agency partners (e.g., a contracted community residential provider, mental health clinicians, or education administrators). The interview panel/committee would be responsible for vetting two or three candidates and recommending these individuals to be interviewed by the designated decision maker. Having a diverse interview panel promotes collaboration and provides a broad, objective view of candidates.

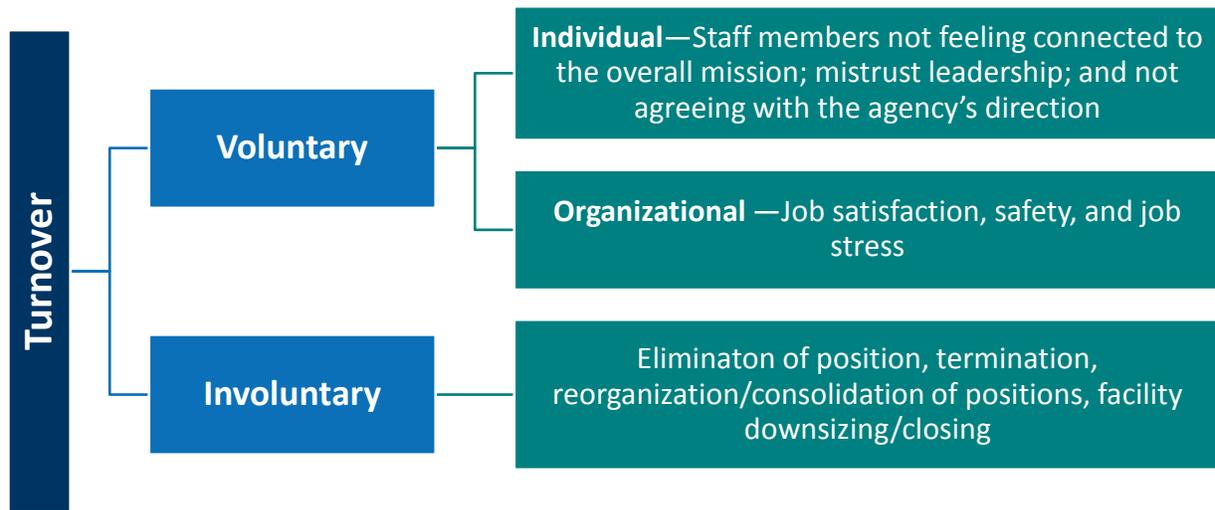
In many jurisdictions, senior-level positions are appointed and, therefore, subject to a different hiring process. However, several core steps in the process should remain, including carefully examining the position description to ensure it accurately reflects the job duties and determining which leadership qualities are essential for the position. In addition, interviews should be competency based and provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their “soft skills” (e.g., communication, team atmosphere, handling disciplinary actions).

Readers should explore the resources mentioned previously for further guidance on recruiting for senior-level positions.

RETAINING QUALIFIED STAFF

Russo et al. (2018) define retention as “issues, processes, and strategies that either promote or hinder an agency’s ability to retain quality staff, such as organizational culture; ongoing feedback and recognition; training and development; promotional opportunities; and measures to address staff safety, health, wellness, and morale” (p. 3).

Staff retention can be thought of as the opposite of turnover, which social researchers often separate into two distinct categories—voluntary or involuntary turnover. Staff retention is a complex puzzle that has many contributing factors and as many complex solutions. As previously described, agency and facility culture play a significant role in retaining qualified staff. Reasons why staff stay or leave their jobs can be organized into two components—organizational and individual factors (Mikytuck & Cleary, 2016). Research shows organizational factors that may influence a person’s decision to remain in their position include job satisfaction, safety, and job stress. Individual factors include staff members not feeling connected to the overall mission, mistrust in leadership, and not agreeing with the agency’s direction (Mikytuck & Cleary, 2016) (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Factors Influencing Staff Turnover

In a study by Mikytuck and Cleary (2016), researchers used exit interviews to examine voluntary turnover during a 3-year study period ($N = 173$) within one state’s juvenile justice system. The results highlighted several organizational factors contributing to a person’s decision to stay or leave. Organizational factors included financial compensation/salary, work hours, perception of safety, supervision, promotion or opportunity for promotion, and job assignments. The study findings were consistent with the broader body of correctional literature, which shows:

- Direct care staff and non-direct-care staff leave an organization for different reasons. Mikytuck and Cleary (2016) found the primary reasons juvenile correctional officers voluntarily left their positions were the result of safety concerns and the desire to pursue higher education opportunities. On the contrary, non-direct-care staff most often left because of retirement.
- Job satisfaction is a significant predictor of actual turnover. Corrections direct care staff were most dissatisfied with management’s failure to align their behaviors and practices with the agency’s mission and values (Mikytuck & Cleary, 2016).
- “Inadequate pay, limited recognition, and few opportunities for professional growth, and promotion are associated with increased dissatisfaction in correctional staff...yet this dissatisfaction did not significantly predict turnover” (Minor et al., 2009, as cited in Mikytuck & Cleary, 2016, p. 53).

Research shows that although financial compensation is part of the equation, it is often not the primary reason for employees departing. In fact, organizational factors play the primary role in staff retention and voluntary turnover. Branham (as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009) found that surveys from nearly 20,000 private-sector workers from 18 different industries indicated that 80% to 90% of employees leave for reasons not related to money; rather, they leave because of job duties, the supervisor/manager, the work environment, and the agency and facility culture. In another study of 1,000 employees conducted by Kovach (as cited in Nink, 2010), researchers found that although supervisors believe employees rank good wages as their top priority, survey data showed employees listing good wages as number five. In fact, “employees were more interested in interesting work, appreciation, involvement, and job security” (Nink, 2010, p. 6). A study conducted by the Management and Training Corporation also found similar results—salary was not identified in the top five items valued by security staff (Conner, 2001, as cited in Nink, 2010).



Job satisfaction speaks to the fit between an individual and his or her job (Stohr et al., 1992). It makes sense that when fit is strong and workers like their jobs, they will be less likely to intend to leave. This is especially the case when people who like their particular jobs also fit well with and are affectively committed to the larger organization for which they work.”

—Lambert et al., 1999; Stohr et al., 1992, as cited in Matz et al., 2013, pp. 125–126

These findings suggest agencies can intervene and improve staff retention by strategically addressing agency culture issues, particularly ensuring managers are supporting staff. Further, staff, especially those in the millennial generation, struggle with feeling disempowered. Bonner (2017) found that approximately 55% of corrections officers in one jurisdiction believed “they have little or no say over what happens in their job and lack input on decisions that affect them” (p. 9). Many desire a career where they feel valued and invested in the decisions, policies, and procedures of the organization. Giving staff a voice can go a long way in promoting an engaged workforce.

Lambert (2004, as cited in Wells et al., 2016) found that job satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment. They explain that staff who are highly satisfied with their jobs tend to see the organization in favorable terms, which promotes a stronger bond with the agency (Wells et al.,



A study by Development Dimensions International found that employees consider an organization's ability to provide a good work/life balance, trust, a good relationship with the boss, and meaningful work as paramount in their decision to continue employment.⁴² That same study found three quarters of the employees surveyed believed the quality of supervisory relations and employee ability to establish a balance between work and home life as very important for retention.”

—Nink, 2010, p. 5

2016). Therefore, “the greatest retention challenge is not how to reduce turnover. Rather, it is how to create such a deep, unified commitment to the organizational vision that employees will be reluctant to sever that bond” (Stinchcomb et al., 2009, p. 7).

Similarly, Matz et al. (2013, as cited in Wells et al., 2016) corroborate other research studies that indicate a staff member’s intent to leave can be reduced by promoting job satisfaction, implementing strategies to increase organizational commitment, providing staff greater input into decisions, and reducing job stress. More specifically, Matz et al. (2013) suggest organizations target improvement efforts at “staff perceptions of supervision, organizational communication, and coworkers” (p. 127). The researchers explain when worker job satisfaction and a strong organizational commitment are present, staff:

- a. “Have more favorable perceptions of the supervision they receive;
- b. Believe that expectations and responsibilities are communicated in a way that stimulates staff motivation and promotes identification with the agency; and
- c. See their coworkers as reliable, trustworthy, and worthy of confidence” (Matz et al., 2013, p. 127).

Several research studies show increasing staff participation in larger facility or agency decisions positively influences job satisfaction. Minor et al. (as cited in Wells et al., 2016) suggest creating staff advisory groups. Direct care staff are the experts on many facility issues and can identify existing problems and develop effective solutions.

Lambert et al. (2016, as cited in Wells et al., 2016) uphold the strong correlation between administrative and supervisor support with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The authors state that one influential factor on staff retention is a manager’s ability to sincerely listen to staff concerns and offer staff recognition whenever possible. The authors explain:

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) noted that “indiscriminate praise given to all employees or other easily penetrable facades of disingenuous approval by agents of the organization would reduce perceived organizational support” (p. 504). In addition, supervisors, managers, and administrators need to engage in transactional justice. Transactional justice means being honest and forthcoming to employees and treating them with respect and dignity. (Lambert et al., 2007, as cited in Wells et al., 2016, pp. 1574–1575)

As discussed earlier, open, transparent, and supportive leadership plays a significant role in changing the culture and ultimately, retaining staff. Gregory P. Smith, author of *Here Today, Here Tomorrow: Transforming Your Workforce from High Turnover to High-Retention* (2001, as

cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009), outlines eight critical elements common to agencies that experience low staff turnover. These are:

- “a clear sense of direction and purpose;
- caring management;
- flexible benefits and schedules adapted to the needs of the individual;
- open communication;
- a charged work environment;
- performance management;
- reward and recognition; [and]
- training and development” (p. 87).

KEY TAKEAWAY:

- ✓ A staff member’s intent to leave can be reduced by promoting job satisfaction, implementing strategies to increase organizational commitment, providing staff greater input into decisions, and reducing job stress (Matz et al., 2013, as cited in Wells et al., 2016, p. 1558).
- ✓ Target improvement efforts at “staff perceptions of supervision, organizational communication and coworkers” (Matz et al., 2013, p. 127).

Jurisdictions should carefully consider and address each of these elements when developing a comprehensive workforce development strategy. Agencies must ask themselves: How are we currently demonstrating each of these elements? What can we do to improve in this area? What specific steps do we need to take to create a work environment that reflects these elements? As part of this process, it is important to gather ideas from direct care staff on effective strategies in each of these areas.

Smith (2001, as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009) provides additional insight on how agency management can influence staff retention. In his research, Smith explains the management-related factors that influence why people leave their roles:

- management demands that one person does the jobs of two or more people, resulting in longer days;
- management doesn’t allow direct care staff to make decisions or allow them ownership;
- management constantly reorganizes, shuffles people around, and changes direction;
- management doesn’t take the time to clarify goals and decisions;
- management shows favoritism; and
- management creates a rigid structure while at the same time preaching teamwork and cooperation.

Therefore, agencies should closely examine the current culture and identify specific steps that align with best practices and the agency mission. It also is critical to set clear expectations for

supervisors and provide them the tools necessary to manage in a way that lends itself to retaining qualified staff.

Generational Considerations

Similar to staff recruitment, research shows that generational differences should be considered when developing strategies for staff retention. A [Gallup Research](#) study explored why millennials leave positions more often than other generations. Explanations included:

- “Millennials don't want annual reviews—they want ongoing conversations. The way millennials communicate—texting, tweeting, Skype, etc.—is now real-time and continuous. Annual reviews no longer work” (Clifton, 2016);
- “Millennials don't want to fix their weaknesses—they want to develop their strengths” (Clifton, 2016); therefore, agencies should minimize weaknesses and maximize strengths when possible); and
- millennials view their work as serving a bigger purpose and therefore ask themselves, “Does this organization value my strengths and my contribution? Does this organization give me the chance to do what I do best every day?” (Clifton, 2016).

Exhibit 9. Strategies to Attract and Retain Generation X, Millennial, and Generation Z Staff

Strategies to Consider	
Generation X (1965–1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop them into leaders by adding to their skill sets through training and professional development opportunities. • Offer autonomy and avoid micromanaging or using fear as a motivational tactic. • Provide flexibility in the workplace. • Be genuine and direct and make interactions purposeful.
Millennials (1980–1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a mentoring and coaching approach to supervision. • Care about their personal and career goals and be committed to helping them achieve them. • Provide structure—goals, deadlines, well-defined assignments, and success factors to address their achievement oriented. • Make work meaningful by connecting work to a larger mission. • Engage social media as platforms for communication, collaboration, learning, and development. • Give them opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to a visible project or assignment. • Give them frequent and productive feedback.

Strategies to Consider

- Promote volunteer opportunities.
-
- Generation Z (1995 and later)**
- Consider work experience over education since many individuals opt to skip college and gain the skills they need in the workforce.
 - Use technology to support communication efforts—mobile phones as opposed to e-mail.
 - Find opportunities to emphasize making a difference—corporate social responsibility.

Sources. Colligan (2013a, 2013b) and the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School (2014).

Coaching and Support

Ultimately, it is the agency’s responsibility to provide the resources necessary for new staff to succeed. This includes regular supervision with an individual’s manager. Individual supervision should be provided weekly and from the moment an employee is hired. During weekly supervision sessions, managers should discuss how the employee feels about the work environment; set and review short- and long-term professional goals; discuss work-life balance; troubleshoot challenges; and answer any questions. Individual sessions are an opportunity for supervisors to give feedback on job performance and discuss areas for improvement. In addition, in-the-moment coaching should take place throughout the workday. Managers who provide targeted guidance on effective approaches for working with youth, the use of de-escalation techniques, applying incentives and consequences, and other important areas ensure staff can apply the tools on which they were trained. Many agencies have a biannual performance evaluation that outlines individual goals and measures an employee’s skills and abilities. Performance evaluations provide staff members information about strengths and areas for improvement and allow a supervisor to coach staff throughout the year.

The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) [Development Planning and Assessment Toolkit](#) (see Worksheet J) provides additional information related to effectively providing individual and group supervision. With effective supervision tools, managers and direct care staff feel more confident in their abilities, ultimately fostering more effective staff-to-youth interactions. The NCWWI authors also suggest agencies deliver “formal in-service training and ongoing professional development to supervisors regarding implementing the agency’s performance management system, HR policies, and procedures” (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2018). As cited earlier, effective supervision has been shown to be highly correlated with staff retention.

Specific checklists to assist agencies in improving retention can be found in the Stinchcomb et al. (2009) article located in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

The Role of Staff Wellness and Safety

Staff Wellness

A core function of direct care staff is interacting with at-risk youth and families. Direct care positions require staff to maintain the safety and security of the facility while helping to rehabilitate youth through role modeling and skill building. Most youth placed in a juvenile justice facility have experienced or have been exposed to traumatic events. “One study found 93% of youth in custody had at least one traumatic incident; over half had experienced trauma six or more times” (Boesky, 2014). Similarly, juvenile justice facility staff are frequently exposed to traumatizing events, such as restraining youth, observing violent fights or assaults between youth, physically intervening between youth who are fighting, youth suicide attempts, and so on. This trauma can be exacerbated by additional stressors such as mandatory overtime, internal investigations of policy violations, and completing administrative tasks. Exposure to such layers of trauma and stress can lead to secondary trauma, posttraumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout for direct care staff. Agencies must acknowledge and respond to this reality.

Dr. Chris Branson of the New York University School of Medicine, a national expert in trauma, has conducted studies to examine the impact of trauma on juvenile justice staff. During the 2018 CJCA Leadership Institute meeting, Dr. Branson offered practical guidance to agencies when working with staff exposed to workplace trauma. Some of these tips included:

- Relieve staff of their post immediately following a serious incident such as a suicide attempt or an assault to allow them time to decompress.
- As part of formal debriefing procedures, follow up with staff to ask how they are doing and what they need. The debriefing process should be available to all staff, not those just directly involved in the incident, and should include reminding staff of possible symptoms they may experience; reminding staff of the available support; not forcing individuals to talk; and not including a detailed recap of the significant event.
- Include in pre-employment training the impact of trauma on youth; the impact of trauma on staff; specific skills for responding to youth; and skills for staff to manage their own stress and trauma. Consider using a formal curriculum such as *Think Trauma: A Training for Staff in Juvenile Justice Residential Settings* developed by Dr. Monique Marrow.
- Create peer support groups and offer voluntary meetings for direct care staff to gather to practice skills related to their own trauma (e.g., recognizing signs of trauma, knowing what own triggers are, steps to working with the trauma).
- Provide formal training to supervisors on how best to respond to staff who have been traumatized.

- Ensure Employee Assistance Program staff are trained in how to effectively respond to staff who have experienced trauma. Agencies may consider engaging a mental health clinician who specializes in trauma and who may be contacted immediately following the event to provide staff support.
- Consider surveying staff regarding their view of the level of organizational support around trauma and having staff voluntarily complete a posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) scale to determine the degree of trauma for staff (as agency, local, and state regulations allow).

Compassion fatigue, also called “vicarious traumatization” or secondary traumatization (Figley, 1995), is a phenomenon where staff who provide services to traumatized populations are indirectly traumatized. The interaction between staff members and traumatized youth places direct care staff at heightened risk for secondary trauma. Posttraumatic stress occurs when staff have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event. Spinaris, Denhof, and Kellaway (2012) estimate that “during their careers, United States corrections professionals experience an average of 28 exposures to violence, injury or death-related events. Increases in both the total number of exposures and the number of types of exposures has also been associated with worse scores on a range of health, functioning, and well-being measures” (as cited in Denhof et al., 2014, p. 4).

Denhof et al. (2014) offer a corrections-focused model called “corrections fatigue” that encapsulates vicarious trauma and includes other critical factors. The author defines corrections fatigue as:

a collection of negative and inter-related consequences upon the health and functioning of corrections professionals and the workplace culture...due to exposure to traumatic, operational, and organizational stressors and their interacting consequences. (p. 6)

Three major types of stressors are identified in the Corrections Fatigue Process Model—Organizational, Operational, and Traumatic. Researchers Schaufeli and Peeters (2000, as cited in Denhof et al., 2014) describe each of these as:

- “Organizational stressors include dual role conflict, difficult/demanding social interactions, low organizational support, and insufficient education and training on coping strategies.
- Operational stressors include such facets as high workload, mandatory overtime, and low decision authority, as well as immersion in harsh physical environmental conditions.
- Traumatic stressors consist of direct and indirect exposures to violence, injury, and death events, and [occur] repeatedly over time” (p. 8).

Juvenile justice agencies are designed to serve those in need. If the goal is to assist youth in developing skills to be successful and healthy in the world, it seems logical that juvenile justice agencies also would want to meet these needs for their staff. Staff wellness is essential to staff retention. Denhof et al. (2014) uphold that when an agency does not support direct care staff in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, corrections fatigue or compassion fatigue can set in, leading to detrimental individual and organizational effects. Denhof et al. (2014) explain that several significant effects of corrections fatigue exist:

- **Dysfunctional Ideology and Behavior**—Adoption of the “us against them” perspective (staff versus justice-involved individuals or direct care staff versus administrators). This perspective often manifests itself as “cynicism, workplace alienation, and indifference.”
- **Negative Personality Changes**—A negative emotional state marked by decreased empathy or compassion and a decline in health and functioning (e.g., increased isolation, PTSD, depressed mood, anxiety). Negative personality changes also can manifest as “Negative emotions, such as shame, guilt, and anger; and increased substance use; declined performance on the job, in relationships, in caregiving, in attending to personal responsibilities, and inability to enjoy leisure time; increased suicide risk; reduced life satisfaction; and lowered physical health” (Denhof & Spinaris, 2013; Philliber, 1987; Poole, 1980; Spinaris, Denhof, & Kellaway, 2012; as cited in Denhof et al., 2014).
- **Declined Health and Functioning**—Symptoms may include increased depression, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, psychological isolation, reduced self-esteem, disrupted personal relationships, and loneliness. Chronic stress can compromise the immune system, resulting in frequent colds, respiratory infections, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, neck and back pain, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, anxiety attacks, insomnia, and nightmares. Without intervention, health concern can lead to a heart attack, stroke, digestive disorders, ulcerative colitis, and other serious illnesses.

Definition of Trauma:

Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence that involves:

1. “Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s);
2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others;
3. Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend...; and
4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s).”

—Weathers et al., 2015, p. 4

In a *Youth Today* article (as cited in Smith, 2015), Christina Clarke, MS, HS-BCP, Coordinator of Continuing Medical Education and Faculty, Wake Forest School of Medicine, summarizes the

warning signs of corrections fatigue, stress, or burnout as staff having any combination of the following:

- exhaustion;
- reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy;
- anger and irritability;
- increased use of alcohol and drugs;
- sense of dread about working with specific youth;
- diminished sense of enjoyment of career;
- disruption to worldview;
- heightened anxiety or irrational fears;
- intrusive imagery or dissociation;
- hypersensitivity or insensitivity to emotional material;
- difficulty separating work life from personal life;
- absenteeism, an impaired ability to make decisions and care for youth; and
- problems with personal relationships.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SELF-CARE

- Access peer support locally and nationally (CJCA).
- Adhere to work/personal life boundaries.
- Practice self-awareness.
- Let go of perfectionism.
- De-obligate yourself.
- Redefine success.
- Do one small task before you leave work.
- Start evening on a positive note (not about your day).
- Make a specific plan of what you can do instead of work.
- Turn your electronic devices OFF.
- Choose an action that symbolizes the ending of your day.
- Make it home for dinner.

The negative effects from corrections fatigue often contribute to the creation of a toxic work environment. For example, if a staff member subscribes to an “us against them” mentality when working with youth, it is likely that this philosophy will manifest in relationships with their coworkers and upper management. This perception reinforces feelings of isolation and may reduce teamwork. In an environment where safety is paramount and staff must be able to rely on their peers for assistance during high-risk situations, this separateness can jeopardize the safety of staff and youth. Denhof et al. (2014) state, “It seems plausible to expect that declined health and functioning would contribute to increased absenteeism, reduced sensitivity to details, and/or lower work output. The latter might, in turn, put increased strain on other staff, elevate the possibility of security lapses or policy violations, and/or reduce workplace safety” (p. 9).

Mitchell, Mackenzie, Styve, and Gover (2000) found that stress was one of the primary causes of staff turnover. Their research revealed, “Staff members in the present study who reported higher levels of stress were not merely at significantly greater risk of turnover, but at an exponentially higher risk” (p. 352). Therefore, it is critical that agencies put structures in place to intervene early and prevent burnout. After corrections fatigue permeates the workforce, it is difficult to recover. Agencies must proactively prioritize staff health by supporting and promoting the health and well-being of direct care staff before fatigue leads to burnout and high staff turnover.

The Road to Staff Wellness

Self-care is described as “a conscious process of considering our needs and seeking out activities and habits that replenish our energy—so that we can do our jobs better” (Fish, 2018). As advocates of reformation and healthy lifestyles for youth, juvenile justice agency managers have a duty to express genuine care and concern for staff, maintain professional connection, educate staff, and promote health by encouraging self-care. Efforts to prevent and deter corrections fatigue must be continuously addressed through formal assessments, monitoring outcomes, and responding to staff needs immediately.

LAUGHTER IS AN INSTANT VACATION...

- ✓ Reduces the level of stress hormones.
- ✓ Perks up the immune system.
- ✓ Relaxes muscles.
- ✓ Clears the respiratory tract.
- ✓ Increases circulation.
- ✓ Eases perceived pain.
- ✓ Allows feel-good endorphins to flow.
- ✓ Drives away fear.

Education, training, and stress management programs can all help mitigate the negative impacts of work stress. A first step in the process of creating a healthy work environment is to educate staff on compassion fatigue, stress and burnout, vicarious/secondary trauma, signs and symptoms, the associated risk factors, and ways to seek support. Agencies should provide this information as part of the new employee orientation program. Doing so sets the self-care expectation from the beginning and allows employees to develop a plan to prevent burnout. For veteran staff, professional development workshops on trauma therapy can also be used to teach juvenile justice workers methods to prevent or identify symptoms of compassion or corrections fatigue.

Individual workers, their coworkers, supervisors, and the juvenile justice agency must take responsibility to promote self-care and support for employees who need it. Many options exist for promoting and supporting self-care. Denhof et al. (2014) offer the following suggestions to

help staff feel supported: “self-help resources such as books or handouts on resilience, nutrition, relaxation techniques, exercise, emotional self-regulation, skillful conflict resolution, skillful communication, or other relevant content” (p. 13). The authors also emphasize the importance of Employee Assistance Programs (offering mental health support services for staff members or their families); peer groups to provide support following exposure to critical incidents; religious/spiritual support services; and field training officers who may provide mentoring and on-the-job training to new employees (Denhof et al., 2014). It is important to formally train all supervisors on how to recognize the symptoms of corrections and compassion fatigue so they can identify and intervene early.

As part of raising staff awareness about the symptoms of fatigue and resources available, it may be beneficial to offer tools to assess the degree of trauma and fatigue symptoms. Example tools include the Life Events Checklist for the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* created by the National Center for PTSD and the Corrections Fatigue Status Assessment–Version 5 by Denhof et al. (2014; <http://desertwaters.com>). A list of additional tools can be found in the Denhof et al. (2014) article located in the [CJCA Staff Retention and Recruitment Shared Resource Folder](#).

Other self-care strategies include offering longer breaks to allow staff to participate in fitness activities. Using stress-management techniques to reduce the physical and emotional effects of on-the-job stress also can help prevent burnout, for example, yoga, breathing techniques, meditation, and mindfulness. In addition, using cognitive-behavioral techniques may help prevent and manage stress and burnout (e.g., reframing the problem and adjusting your expectations or changing your own reactions and responses).

Supervisors should keep in mind that individuals handle stress differently and, therefore, each staff member must determine which techniques work best for them.

Opening lines of communication is fundamental to creating a healthy work environment that promotes self-care. Giving direct care staff a voice through town hall meetings, regular staff meetings, or retreats are ways to empower staff and decrease work stress. Allowing facility staff to have face-to-face conversations with agency leaders can help build team cohesion. Importantly, that these conversations must be respectful, genuine, and honest.

Another option to promote self-care is to adopt alternative work schedules. An alternative work schedule is a change from a traditional 8-hour workday/40-hour workweek that can enhance the work-life balance for employees. For a 24/7 facility, this can take the form of a compressed work schedule. Compressed workweeks are alternative work arrangements where the standard workweek is reduced to fewer than 5 days and employees make up the full number of hours per week by working longer hours. The most common types of compressed workweek

schedules are 4/10 schedule (four 10-hour days per week) and 9/80 schedule (80 hours in a 2-week period worked over 9 days instead of 10).

Alternative schedules such as four consecutive days on shift and three consecutive days off (10-hour shifts) offer many benefits to staff. Staff members who have children are able to spend three consecutive days with their families and have at least one weekend day off (Saturday or Sunday). An alternative schedule can reduce stress and provide staff the personal time necessary to fully engage in work. From an agency perspective, this alternative schedule offers greater flexibility in creating shifts and work assignments—that is, a facility can have more staff in the facility to engage youth and increase supervision without having to increase the total number of staff. An alternative schedule can also improve productivity, morale, and drive by providing additional hours to be used for staff supervision and the completion of administrative tasks. Jurisdictions also may consider rotating schedules to facilitate weekends off for direct care staff. Because forced overtime is a major stressor for many direct care staff, managers may consider implementing flexible schedules to alleviate overtime or place a limit on the number of overtime hours permitted (e.g., maximum of 4 hours per day or week).

To further promote wellness and demonstrate support for staff, some agencies have allowed staff to use facility exercise equipment after work hours. If this is not possible, jurisdictions may consider contracting with a local gym for discounted rates for its employees. This arrangement may promote staff wellness and have the secondary benefit of providing a small incentive that may help influence staff retention. In some cases, providing access to exercise equipment or gym discounts may be linked to employee health benefits and can benefit the agency in cost savings.

If the proper actions are taken to promote staff wellness, agencies/facilities will successfully decrease burnout and staff turnover; increase resiliency of direct care staff; and improve the quality of services delivered to youth. Following are strategies staff can use to decrease the likelihood of corrections fatigue and burnout.

Active Strategies for Self-Care

- Cut yourself a break—Ask yourself: “What would I say to a colleague in the same situation?”
- Keep your internal critic at bay.
- Take a victory lap.
- Hit the “pause button.”
- Debrief past successes.

- Carve out time outside work to nurture relationships.
- Use breaks or commute time to connect with friends and loved ones.
- Surround yourself with good people.
- Who feeds your energy...and who drains it?
- Recharge and reboot.
- Stay aware of your energy levels.
- Designate one or two nights a week to get extra sleep.
- Build restoration breaks into your day.
- Create and adhere to Safety Plans/Self Care Plans.
- Teams within your agency to facilitate responses to staff exposure to trauma.
- Critical Incident Stress Management Plan for yourself.
- Conduct process groups within your working space/unit/office.
- Healthy forums for staff and youth to express needs (employee/youth advisory councils).

The Value of Staff Recognition

Recognizing and celebrating staff and team achievements can influence job satisfaction. Whether the agency is recognizing staff performance, years of service, or a specific achievement, public acknowledgment and showing appreciation can be a protective factor against job burnout. These acknowledgments can be conveyed through a formal ceremony, facility or administrator meetings, or through an agency newsletter. Agencies may choose to hand out awards (e.g., pens, T-shirts, water bottles) to groups of employees or to individual team members (e.g., best staff, best holiday decorations). They also may choose to recognize teams for meeting an agency's objective (e.g., lowest utilization of overtime, fewest altercations in the program, decreased rate of isolation) or for exemplary behavior demonstrating a commitment to the agency mission. Acknowledging the ways in which staff contribute to the agency's mission benefits employees and the entire organization.

For staff recognition to be impactful, agencies must have a clear understanding of what is meaningful to staff. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) offer best practices when giving staff recognition.

- make sure the reward is something valued by the person being rewarded;
- match the reward to the achievement—that is, the significance of the achievement and how it has helped the organization;

- be timely and specific—that is, give the reward as soon as possible after the employee’s achievement; and
- involve employees in designing or revising the agency’s recognition program.

These strategies are cost-effective and can help maintain employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and enhance job satisfaction. Adequate support and attention from managers, coworkers, and agency administrators positively influence job satisfaction and staff retention.

Specific examples selected from Stinchcomb et al. (2009) are provided here. A complete list can be found in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

Recognition strategies include:

- **Spot Award**—A monetary reward for a suggestion or action that resulted in significant cost savings.
- **Initial Hire**—During the first month of employment, the facility administrator sends a welcome card to each new team member.
- **Score Boarding**—Employee achievements such as accident-free days, no use of sick leave, or accident-free miles are posted in areas where everyone can see.
- **Superintendent Award**—Recognizing an employee for not just one achievement, but for consistently outstanding performance.
- **We Heard Something Good About You**—A visitor, contractor, volunteer, or attorney informs the supervisor of an employee going beyond the call of duty, who is then recognized with a special card outlining their actions.
- **Carpe Diem Award**—Latin for “Seize the Day,” this award is provided to a group who collectively accomplished tasks their supervisor determined to be a high priority.
- **Birthday Recognition**—The facility administrator sends a card to employees in their birthday month.
- **Community Service**—Staff are acknowledged for volunteering to clean a roadway, become a blood donor, collect items for the food bank, and so on.

A summary of strategies for engaging, managing, and retaining staff across generations is provided here. A more detailed list can be found in the Stinchcomb et al. (2009) article located in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#). Exhibit 10 also provides examples of best practices with regard to recognition, supervising, and retaining staff.

Exhibit 10. Motivation Across the Great Generation Divide

Work-Related Factors	Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979)	Millennials (born between 1980 and 1994)
Showing appreciation	Thank them with an e-mail that also asks for their input on another issue.	Thank them personally or by e-mail but treat them as an equal.
Engaging employees	Empower them, and then let them alone to do their work.	Encourage and use their technology
Management practices	Avoid the strong management approach—be honest and give them independence.	Be a role model for them and lead them with sincerity.
Retention initiatives	Allow flexibility for family and work balance.	Allow flexibility but provide a mentoring and coaching relationship.

Source. Stinchcomb, McCampbell, and Layman, 2006, as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009.

Staff Safety

Safety for the juvenile justice workforce should be a stated priority for all jurisdictions serving youth. Data from the field of juvenile justice and adult corrections show high rates of medical leave and workers compensation claims when compared with other industries. At a foundational level, facilities must have an adequate number of staff who work as a team. When calculating staffing needs, the agency must factor in planned and unplanned staff absences; time needed to transport or transition youth from settings; and hours per week needed for youth to work one-on-one with their staff mentor/primary staff. For additional information regarding conducting a detailed staffing analysis, readers should consult the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections' *Prison Staffing Analysis: A Training Manual With Staffing Considerations for Special Populations* (2008). Facilities should have a strong base of staff available to meet emergent needs, operate a quality program, and develop important relationships with youth.

Direct care staff have two interrelated roles, the first being safety and accountability, accomplished by effectively managing youth behaviors, and the second being that of teacher/mentor/counselor, in which staff guide and support youth in developing the skills necessary for success in the community. These roles are not mutually exclusive. It is essential that facilities assist staff in deepening their understanding of how to effectively fulfill each role and their impact on facility safety. This process begins with basic and ongoing training for new staff in the areas of adolescent brain development, trauma-informed care, positive youth

engagement strategies, situational awareness, de-escalation, use of force, restraints, involuntary room confinement, defensive disengagement, social learning theory, cognitive-behavioral treatment interventions, and behavior management. Providing adequate training gives staff the knowledge to ensure youth and staff safety. Research supports that when staff feel safe, they are more likely to report feeling connected to the agency's mission and, therefore, more likely to remain in their positions.

Research shows that staff-to-youth relationships can have a significant impact on preventing violence and maintaining a safe work environment. When youth trust staff members, they are more likely to respond to verbal de-escalation. Similarly, establishing healthy relationships with coworkers contributes to a safe work environment where staff can rely on one another for support. The power of relationships can be promoted through training on safety policies and procedures; on-the-job coaching and support; and implementing internal processes to ensure that program practices align with agency expectations. To most effectively serve youth, staff must feel safe in their work environment and facilities must provide staff the tools necessary to maintain a safe environment.

Just as healthy relationships contribute to a safe environment, so does structured programming. Reducing idle time by keeping youth engaged in programming will reduce incidents of assaults. Having specialized staff who are responsible for planning and arranging recreational activities can yield more varied and diverse programming for youth. Many jurisdictions have found that offering additional physical activities have a profound positive impact on facility safety. These activities also provide opportunities for staff to build connections with young people, thus practicing the skills taught in training and experiencing the impact of their position.

As previously mentioned, a stable workforce whose members support one another significantly influences program safety. Positive trusting relationships with coworkers and effective communication also ensure consistency and fairness in staff responses to youth. High staff turnover threatens relationships and, consequently, negatively impacts team cohesiveness. Staff turnover can force mandatory overtime; add stress to the personal and professional lives of staff; challenge staff's ability to serve as positive role models; and hamper staff's ability to build trusting relationships with youth. As research has shown, safety concerns are among the leading influencers of staff retention. Therefore, it is critical that agencies provide staff with the information, tools, and support needed to ensure a safe environment for youth and staff.

Succession Planning and Leadership Development

Building the Bench

Kim (2003, as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009) describes succession planning as “an on-going, purposeful, and systematic identification of qualified and appropriate successors to leadership, with a commitment to assessing, developing, and investing in organizational leadership to enhance performance, development, and preparedness” (pp. 105–106).

Succession planning is an important factor contributing to staff retention. Stinchcomb, McCampbell, and Layman (2006, as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009) define succession planning as “the systematic process of:

- forecasting future management needs proactively;
- identifying career paths;
- analyzing key positions;
- assessing candidates for those key positions;
- investing in candidates to create a ready reserve of skilled and knowledgeable individuals; and
- selecting people for key positions” (p. 20).

Research has shown among the primary reasons staff leave a position is a lack of career development or advancement. If employees feel their employer is invested in their future and supporting them in achieving their personal and professional goals, direct care staff may view their current position as a stepping stone in a career, rather than simply a job. With this understanding, it is important for agencies to invest in succession planning that includes assisting staff in creating their professional goals; recognizing accomplishments; and providing professional development opportunities.

Further, facilities must recognize and remove institutional barriers to retaining qualified, veteran staff. Russo et al. (2018) describe some institutional limits to leadership development as mandatory retirement ages, increased take-home pay because of overtime, and limited direct interaction with youth. Facilities using fixed-age retirement should consider using a “fit-for-duty” assessment to ascertain staff’s ability to meet job requirements. As mentioned, high turnover often leads to increased overtime for direct care staff. Augmented direct care salaries can surpass leadership salaries, disincentivizing promotions. Relatedly, time spent on administrative duties limits direct care time—the reason many staff work in juvenile justice. These factors can result in less qualified or experienced staff being promoted to leadership

positions. Therefore, facilities should act to reduce the use of excessive overtime, encourage opportunities for supervisory positions to interact with youth, and alter mandatory retirement ages to allow the most qualified staff to take on leadership roles.

It is never too early to begin succession planning. In fact, succession planning can begin as early as the initial interview. During the interview process, agencies have an opportunity to ask candidates about their long-term goals and share information about promotional opportunities. This sends a clear message that the agency invests in its employees. For those candidates who have never worked in the juvenile justice field, information about career path possibilities is useful. Upon hire, agencies are encouraged to use this information to develop professional goals with the new employee.

Because all new employees must attend formal orientation training, agencies may introduce new employees to organizational development opportunities at this time. Supervisors also can gather information during the probationary period that will assist in identifying potential agency leaders. This work can be done by completing staff evaluations throughout the probationary period. Staff who may not currently be in a management position can still have a strong influence on other direct care staff. Identifying these “informal” leaders will allow management to leverage natural “champions” within the ranks to build a positive work culture.

Succession planning must be supported by a salary structure that incentivizes job progression and upward mobility. Many juvenile justice direct care staff are represented by unions and, therefore, are covered by Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). CBAs have negotiated wage scales and benefits. Some direct care staff may be hesitant to leave their current position for fear of not being protected by a union or having the certainty of wages and benefits. When agencies review pay scales, they should consider the existing CBA wages and benefits. In addition, agencies should allow promoted staff to return to their former position if the position is not a good fit and an opening exists. This move should not cost them seniority and other benefits. Staff’s ability to explore and find the best fit within the agency illustrates the agency’s investment in staff and can help retain strong, committed employees.



The most crucial career development question is not how training or mentoring can be improved. Rather, it is how to equip employees with the knowledge and skills needed to maximize their potential, and in turn, that of the organization.”

“The most serious succession planning concern is not how to fill upcoming management vacancies. Rather, it is how to inspire future leaders who will maintain the passion when the torch is passed to them.”

—Stinchcomb et al., 2009, p. 7

Leadership Development

McCauley, Moxley, and Velsor (1998) define leadership development as the “systematic process of expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (as cited in Stinchcomb et al., 2009, p. 106).

Because all positions require different skill sets, agencies should consider several factors when promoting individuals, particularly when promoting staff to management positions. Each position within the agency should have a distinct but related set of core competencies. Promotions should be based on current job performance and how well the candidate meets (or can potentially meet) the core competencies associated with the desired position. Agencies also should consider developing structured criteria to determine staff’s level of readiness for a supervisory position (Russo et al., 2018). If an agency is going to succeed, it is critical that midlevel supervisors are well equipped to effectively coach, support, and supervise new direct care staff members.

Leadership Academy

To assist with development opportunities, agencies may consider creating a “Leadership Academy.” The state of Utah Department of Human Services, Division of Juvenile Justice Services created a Leadership Academy in 2018 to develop leaders who can influence others and affect change. The academy is structured as a 1-year program, composed of four training sessions. During the 2-day sessions, participants are required to complete several group assignments. The academy focuses on teaching future leaders the fundamentals of communication, self-awareness, coaching, building resilience in self and others, systematic thinking, and converting strategies into action.

Human Resources and training departments can partner to create such an academy, with the goal of identifying and developing current staff who demonstrate the agency’s mission and vision; promote a positive work environment; embrace team principles; have a true passion for working with youth; and have an interest in mentoring new staff.

A Leadership Academy must be voluntary and include incentives for participation. Although monetary incentives are most desired, agencies may need to generate alternative methods of compensation. Examples may be letters of recommendation, awards, recognition in public forums (e.g., agency board meetings, newsletters, or through public officials or unions), additional days off, parking spots, and donated gift cards, to name a few. Nonmonetary incentives can sometimes be more meaningful to staff than monetary compensation.

Because agencies want staff to succeed, it is critical to select the right direct care staff to participate in a Leadership Academy. The agency should consider several data sources, such as performance evaluations, attendance history, discipline history, behaviors demonstrating

leadership tendencies or skills, and recommendations from coworkers or supervisors. Participating in the Leadership Academy involves a significant commitment on behalf of the agency and selected candidates—for example, training, time, monetary (backfilling positions)—therefore, staff should fully understand the commitment involved prior to accepting a spot in the academy.

Using data to track progress is an important component for all initiatives. As such, agencies should consider gathering data related to the Leadership Academy. Examples include the number/rates of individuals completing the Leadership Academy and number/rate of individuals who are promoted within 3 years of participating in the academy. These data can then be used to assist with recruiting staff internally and externally for future academies. Data can entice potential candidates to apply for agency positions and reinforce that the agency is invested in its employees.

Job Shadowing

After potential leaders are identified, job shadowing is an important first step for individuals who may be interested in other positions within the agency. Job shadowing provides an opportunity for staff to experience other positions firsthand. Agencies should begin with providing a job description and post orders to the candidates so they can gain a basic understanding of the position. Living “a day in the life” is an effective way for someone to determine if they are interested and whether they would be a good fit. Although shadowing for a full shift may not be feasible, agencies may consider breaking up the job shadowing experience into 2-hour increments over several shifts. To get the most value out of the experience, the staff member doing the shadowing should create a list of questions to ask throughout and following the experience. Gathering additional information will allow the candidate to evaluate whether they would like to be considered. Examples of questions include:

- How long have you been in your position?
- What is the best part of the position?
- What are the challenges of the position?
- What do you think makes someone successful in the position?

Leadership Development Training

Whether an agency chooses to develop a formal Leadership Academy or an informal succession plan, all direct care staff should be exposed to supervisory foundational skills. This serves two purposes: (1) assists staff in better understanding their relationship to their immediate supervisor and (2) provides information that may spark career development interest. To embed leadership development across training opportunities, agencies may consider incorporating the

following topics into new employee orientation, new managers training, annual in-service training, or the Leadership Academy:

- supervisory responsibilities;
- effective communication;
- giving feedback and improving employee performance;
- conflict resolution;
- understanding progressive discipline and the grievance process;
- effective time management strategies;
- effective interviewing (competency-based behavioral interviewing skills and the staff selection process);
- strategic planning;
- work-life balance tactics; and
- team building.

Agencies are encouraged to consult the National Institute of Corrections publication [*Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century: Manager and Supervisor Levels*](#) (2006) to determine training topic areas for the Leadership Academy. This manual provides core competencies intrinsic to effective leaders.

Because in-house training can be costly, agencies may consider alternatives for providing professional growth opportunities. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) offer specific examples, including:

- distance or e-learning through colleges and universities;
- computer-based seminars;
- team projects on priority agency or community issues;
- job simulation exercises with feedback;
- job rotations;
- assignment as a liaison or representative to internal agency and interagency committees;
- reading list, assignments, and structured discussions;
- mentoring programs; and
- individual assessments assessing personal strengths and weaknesses.

Readers are encouraged to explore the detailed Leadership Development checklist developed by Stinchcomb et al. (2009), which can be found in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

Case Study | Alabama Department of Youth Services

Development of career paths for entry-level staff can promote retention and help staff build careers. Alabama's Department of Youth Services serves as a creative example of working within existing systems to streamline hiring and build career paths within facilities.

They began by establishing Youth Service Aide (YSA) (a direct care staff position) as direct hires, allowing potential employees to circumvent the state system and allowing the facility to directly manage a file of applicants. To further streamline the process, the facility worked to have specific classifications (YSA, Security officers, nurses, etc.) deemed essential for the health and safety of youth, allowing blanket approval to backfill these positions when needed. This approach shortens the time between application and onboarding by several weeks.

Understanding that recruitment and retention are interconnected, the facility knew they would need to expand opportunities to keep these new hires. Prior to their changes, a nondegreed YSA could remain within their position/classification regardless of years of experience. The facility collaborated with state personnel to restructure and reclassify the YSA position into four levels, each with increased responsibility and pay ranges. Levels are now based on minimum years of experience plus demonstration of leadership initiative. YSA levels could lead to a limited number of management positions. The success for entry-level staff led to changes in growth for staff with bachelor's degrees by considering experience for leadership positions. Such changes promote an environment that recognizes drive and longevity within the facility and provides selling points for recruitment efforts.

IMPACT OF LABOR UNIONS

Many juvenile justice agencies have direct care staff who are represented by labor unions. Labor unions can have an impact on staff retention, especially if agency leaders do not have a solid working relationship with their union partners. Creating a trusting relationship with labor union representatives is an essential component to creating a healthy and productive work environment. Union leaders can advocate for initiatives, help reduce grievances, influence staff engagement, reduce litigation, and prevent unfair labor practice charges.

Establishing a positive working relationship with the union may seem daunting, especially for agencies whose relationship with unions may be strained. The change process takes persistence, honesty, and transparency. Agencies may find it helpful to remind labor unions that we are all working toward the same goal—to achieve the agency mission and ensure staff and youth safety. When agency leaders and labor union representatives have a contentious or distant relationship, achieving this goal is not likely. Agencies should provide union representatives with information about planned initiatives, upcoming changes, concerns, and other items impacting direct care staff.

Agencies should explore opportunities to engage unions as partners to harness their influence. Some jurisdictions have labor union representatives present at new employee orientation, which is the first time a new employee will observe interactions between management and labor union staff. An agency also can include labor union representatives in regular labor management meetings to demonstrate their commitment to building a healthy relationship. These interactions provide an opportunity for both parties to discuss ongoing issues, system change, or concerns. Productive labor management meetings can improve staff morale by dispelling any rumors circling within the agency. It is imperative that agency leadership ensure these meetings are productive and that respectful communication is maintained. Some additional tips to ensure productive labor union-management meetings include:

- **Maintain the relationship at all costs.** Both parties must commit to being transparent, truthful, and respectful.
- **Communicate openly and respectfully.** Seek insight from union leaders on techniques for engaging and messaging to staff, and view union leaders as a conduit to staff needs.
- **Work hard and don't give up.** Both parties must make genuine attempts to resolve issues and recognize that, at times, you may have to agree to disagree.
- **Use a formal agenda** to guide the discussion and ensure meeting goals are attained. Agenda should include items from both parties.
- **Create a “parking lot”** for those items that surface from the meeting but are not on the agenda. These items should be saved until the following meeting.
- **Follow through with commitments.** If one party commits to providing additional information by an agreed-upon date, it is important that the party follows through with the promise.
- **Include a success story.** This may include using data to show a reduction in staff discipline or a reduction in isolation time for youth.

- **Ensure high-level management (decision makers) are present at these meetings.** Assigning a “designee” to attend on a regular basis sends the message that management does not view these meetings as a priority.
- **Emphasize priorities but consider everything important.** Issues that might seem “small” to managers should be addressed in a timely manner to reinforce that employee concerns are important to management.
- **Celebrate successes together.** Remember to acknowledge the accomplishments—for example, issues resolved, negotiated collective bargaining agreements, grievance settlements, employee recognition, and so on.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

Collective bargaining is another opportunity to establish trust and improve relationships with labor unions. Although collective bargaining negotiations take place infrequently, CBAs are a representation of the commitment between staff and the employer. During negotiations, conditions of employment are discussed—for example, wages, working hours, overtime, sick and vacation time, retirement packages, health care benefits, the grievance process, and employee and employer rights. The goal of the collective bargaining is a written agreement signed by both parties and valid for a term agreed (typically 3 to 5 years). It is important that the right “players” be at the table for these discussions. Although it is common for a lawyer to serve as the chief spokesperson for each side, the involved parties should carefully select who will on their bargaining team. Agencies should select managers who have a deep understanding of system and facility operations. Similarly, labor unions should select staff from various positions to serve as content experts, who can assist the chief negotiator when presenting union proposals. As with all labor union-management meetings, during collective bargaining negotiations both parties should remind themselves they are all working toward the same goal—to achieve the agency mission of helping youth.

Shifts and staffing schedules are common topics during collective bargaining sessions. To maintain facility safety, the agency should consider advocating for having new employees spread out among all shifts. Doing so will ensure that the second shift (often 2–10 p.m.) is not stacked with new less-experienced or newly trained staff. The second shift is perhaps the most critical because staff are interacting more frequently with youth. Agencies may consider making proposals that include an option where seniority is not the only basis for shift preference. Furthermore, it is common for agencies to grant senior staff their preferred schedules, which rarely includes working weekends. As a result, new direct care staff can be forced to work weekend shifts for years, disrupting the work-life balance and negatively impacting job satisfaction. Agency leaders may consider rotating days off or having staff bid on schedules

more frequently than once every 2 years. As research indicates, employees who are seeking a work-life balance may not be willing to “pay their dues over an extended period of time” (Russo et al., 2018) and will likely leave their positions. CBA conversations provide an opportunity to pose these changes.

USING DATA TO DRIVE CHANGE

Using data to understand current strengths and needs allows agencies to develop effective strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff. Data related to the hiring process, characteristics of the available labor pool, and why individuals choose to stay with an organization will help agencies effectively address root causes of high staff turnover. For simplicity, this toolkit will discuss two main “pools” of data:

- **Data used to understand the problem**—Data that assist in diagnosing the issue by identifying the root causes/factors contributing to the issue.
- **Data to track progress and determine the impact of the solution**—Data that help agencies ascertain whether the solutions or strategies they have implemented are having the desired effect.

A brief explanation of the two pools of data are provided here.

1. Understanding the Problem

Collecting and analyzing data allows agencies to develop a tailored approach to recruiting qualified staff. Using a variety of data can assist agencies in understanding the available applicant pool and existing trends to determine recruitment strategies that will be most effective. Stinchcomb et al. (2009) suggest the following data sources for staff recruitment planning.

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)—Gather information about the available labor pool (e.g., unemployment rates) in the community.
- U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)—Find community demographic data (e.g., age, education, income). Use the American Fact Finder to get a “Fact Sheet” for your zip code/city/county.
- Local demographic data sources—Capture unique characteristics of the state and region.
- Local Chamber of Commerce—Information about future trends (e.g., businesses planning to open or close).
- Salary comparison—Explore a comparison of salaries/benefits of other public and private agencies in the region to assess competition.

Wells et al. (2016) encourage agencies to use data to explore turnover risks and act to prevent qualified staff from leaving. More specifically, the authors encourage agencies to “proactively monitor and address factors promoting voluntary turnover among racial minority and younger staff, as adequate retention and representation of these staff is essential in correctional agencies. Factors rendering such staff at greater risk for turnover should be identified and constructively resolved before culminating in turnover” (p. 1575). The authors further encourage agencies to closely examine the point at which most applicants drop out. Implementing effective strategies to address this frequent “drop out” point will increase the likelihood candidates continue in the hiring process (hopefully culminating in hiring and retaining staff).

Studying the existing hiring process can provide valuable information about where inefficiencies reside. As previously mentioned, research supports that delays in the hiring process can deter qualified applicants from continuing. (It is strongly suggested that agencies map the existing hiring process to identify bottlenecks, duplication, and inefficiencies that contribute to resource drain.) Using a lean management framework and tools will allow agencies to readily identify inefficiencies and use data to build a process that is efficient and effective. For optimal results, jurisdictions should secure facilitators who specialize in lean management techniques. Agencies may contact CJCA for additional resources and guidance in this area.

Direct care staff and managers are the experts in the work they do. Therefore, agencies should gather information from these staff about underlying issues and potential solutions to staff recruitment and retention challenges. As previously discussed, surveys (exit, stay, and culture climate) and focus groups are excellent methods for gathering information from staff members about the agency and the hiring process. With either approach, Stinchcomb et al. (2009) suggest agencies gather information from direct care staff regarding:

- why they were interested in working as a direct care staff in a juvenile justice facility;
- the most influential factors they considered when accepting the position;
- what they feel are critical competencies or skill sets for performing job duties;
- ideas for effectively recruiting and retaining staff;
- agency and facility strengths and weaknesses; and
- challenges they experienced during the hiring process and potential solutions to these issues.

2. Tracking Progress and Determining the Impact of the Solution

After an agency has analyzed data and identified the primary causes of turnover, it can develop a plan to address challenges that includes measures to track progress and impact. These

indicators should be developed prior to implementing the identified staff recruitment and retention strategies. As part of this process, the agency should create a formal data collection plan to include short- and long-term goals—that is, those data that are available immediately and other data that may take additional resources to gather. Ongoing, varied data collection allows for ongoing quality assurance discussions that refine the plan in response to community and facility dynamics change.

Data integrity is essential to making sound decisions. As such, it is critical that measures be intentionally selected for each outcome or point to be monitored. This approach ensures consistency across departments, units, facilities, and so on. Individuals who are responsible for data collection and entry should be formally trained on measure definitions; how to properly enter data; how to properly extract data from the system; the importance of data collection; and how this process directly contributes to the agency’s overall mission and strategic goals. To enhance data integrity, agencies also should consider developing reference manuals to guide the data collection process. In addition, agencies should create formal quality assurance structures to ensure the data are accurate. Example measures agencies may consider are provided here:

Recruitment

- number of applicants who were hired using each recruitment strategy;
- number of recruitment events per quarter (e.g., job fairs); and
- average length of time applicants maintain employment for each recruitment strategy.

Hiring

- demographics of existing and new staff members (e.g., ethnicity, generation);
- percentage of staff (between 1 and 3 months of hire) reporting:
 - the job description matched the day-to-day duties;
 - the hiring process was easy to navigate;
 - they were kept informed throughout the hiring process; and
 - they were provided adequate coaching and support from their managers (regarding job duties and effective youth interactions).
- percentage of staff who scored 85% or above on performance appraisal or skills assessment at time of training AND at 6-month follow-up (e.g., supervision, interacting with youth, fidelity to the treatment model); and

- average length of time to onboard staff members (from time of application to hiring date and from time of offer to initial day of work).

Retention

- retention and turnover rates by job title/classification (broken out by voluntary versus involuntary);
- average length of stay (broken out by job title/classification);
- percentage of candidates who successfully complete new employee orientation and are employed 6 and 12 months following training completion;
- data from culture climate surveys, including:
 - percentage of direct care staff report overall satisfaction with their job;
 - percentage of direct care staff indicating a specified level of organizational commitment;
 - percentage of direct care staff indicating a positive relationship/team feeling with coworkers;
 - percentage of direct care staff indicating they feel supported by their managers (e.g., responsive to their needs, managers are supportive and encouraging, staff are kept informed in a timely fashion);
 - percentage of direct care staff reporting they have the tools they need to effectively interact with and supervise youth; and
 - percentage of direct care staff reporting they fear for their safety.
- percentage of stay surveys indicating direct care staff intend to leave their position within the next 6, 12, and 24 months;
- percentage of performance appraisals done within X number of days (timely); and
- percentage of performance appraisal goals that were successfully completed the following year.

The previously mentioned PbS program offers several measures to inform retention strategies. PbS administers surveys to staff, youth, and families twice a year to gather information on perception of safety; facility security; staff training; working conditions; trauma; management-staff relationships; and staff-youth relationships. Survey data are analyzed per facility and compared across facilities throughout the nation. Results have consistently shown staff perceptions of safety are highly correlated with incidents and injuries. In other words, when the number of significant incidents is low, staff and youth report feeling safer, which is an

influential factor in staff retention. PbS surveys allow facilities to highlight what is working, opportunities for recognition, and strategies to address problems.

GETTING STARTED

Jurisdictions may use several frameworks to develop a staff retention workplan. One model developed by Bledsoe (Nink, 2005), offers a simple seven-step process to increase staff retention:

1. “Control the environment, trainer, and mentor, from the time of initial contact, to provide the appropriate first impressions.
2. Provide information to staff continuously, noting the positives about the organization.
3. Use training and other opportunities to develop staff skills and career potential.
4. Facilitate cross training.
5. Recognize staff accomplishments.
6. Establish realistic performance goals and objectives.
7. Incorporate staff into the decision making.”

Another framework worthy of exploration is the [Workforce Development Planning and Assessment Toolkit](#) (2016) created by NCWWI, Children’s Bureau. This toolkit provides a step-by-step process for assessing an agency’s workforce needs and developing a strategic workplan for recruiting and retaining staff. The toolkit is free and provides worksheets to assist agencies through the process. The Workforce Development Tool Kit asserts a 12-month action plan can be developed in 3 to 6 months (three to twelve meetings).

Stinchcomb et al. (2009) provide a simple 4-step process for enhancing recruitment and retention: (1) Building the foundation; (2) Analyzing related information; (3) Developing the action plan; and (4) Implementing and evaluating the action plan. The authors have developed several checklists to guide readers through the workforce development process. Among these checklists are the Strategic Recruitment Planning Checklist, the Strategic Retention Planning Checklist, and the Leadership Development Planning Checklist. Readers are encouraged to explore these resources in the Stinchcomb et al. (2009) article located in the [CJCA Staff Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource Folder](#).

CONCLUSION

Hiring and retaining qualified direct care staff is essential to the success of juvenile justice agencies. This toolkit has provided information and strategies for improving recruitment and hiring of direct care staff. It also provides suggestions and resources related to retaining juvenile justice workers. To summarize, a few highlights are provided here.

Highlight 1: Agency culture plays a large role in staff retention.

A healthy culture begins with supportive, knowledgeable, and open leadership. It also requires creating a team environment where coworkers trust and depend on one another. Research has shown the significant relationship job satisfaction and organizational commitment have on staff retention. Therefore, agencies should make consistent efforts to show how the day-to-day work of direct care staff connects with the larger agency mission. In addition, agencies must create a work environment that values, supports, and encourages staff wellness. A healthy culture is one in which:

- staff contributions and accomplishments are recognized;
- staff input and suggestions for agency and facility improvement are solicited and implemented;
- leadership is open, transparent, and respected;
- leadership is visible—there is regular interactions with direct care staff;
- communication is frequent and tells the whole story to staff at all levels;
- frequent activities with staff promote a sense of belonging and teamwork; and
- staff are offered opportunities for professional growth consistent with their individual goals.



Maintaining a high-quality workforce requires long-term commitment to organizational issues that affect job satisfaction and improve retention.”

—Russo et al., 2018, p. 20

Agencies must invest resources in creating a positive culture if they are going to be successful retaining qualified staff long term.

Highlight 2: Retention begins with effective recruitment strategies.

Finding direct care staff who are a good fit for a juvenile justice facility begins with understanding the type of candidate the facility is seeking and clearly communicating the skills

necessary to perform the job. Competency-based behavioral interviews are an effective method for selecting individuals whose core values align with the agency/facility mission.

Highlight 3: Formal action planning is necessary.

Developing a formal action plan to improve recruitment, hiring, and retention is a critical factor to success. Agencies should involve staff from various disciplines (including direct care staff) in the action plan development process. It is important that leads be identified for each activity and that the action plan be regularly reviewed to ensure implementation activities are completed within the target time frames. The inclusion and influence of unions and CBAs should be leveraged when developing and implementing an action plan.

Highlight 4: Accurate data and tracking progress is critical to success.

Data are a powerful tool that can be used to identify root causes contributing to high staff turnover. Data from stay surveys, exit surveys, culture climate surveys, and focus groups can highlight areas for improvement and provide insight into staff perceptions and the current work environment. Data can also be used to monitor success with implementing recruitment and retention strategies.

Additional Resources

Several organizations offer free technical assistance from experts in a variety of areas related to juvenile justice. The following resources provide access to such technical assistance, as well as additional resources and publications.

- Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA): www.cjca.net
- National Center for Youth in Custody (NCYC): <https://nicic.gov/taxonomy/term/5404/all>
- Center for Coordinated Assistance to States (CCAS): <http://cijr.georgetown.edu/our-work/center-for-coordinated-assistance-to-states/>
- National Institute of Corrections (NIC): <https://nicic.gov/>
- OJJDP's National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC): <https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/tta.html>

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