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Ohio Chosen to Participate in National Child Welfare Research Project

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Over the next four years, Ohio will take part in a national research project designed to improve recruitment and retention of child welfare staff, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced today.

Turnover at child welfare agencies is typically up to six times the national average turnover rate for all industries. To support county public children’s services agencies in their efforts to address that, ODJFS applied to participate in the project, which is being led by the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD). The QIC-WD was established in 2016 and is funded through a five-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Children’s Bureau. It chose eight sites nationwide through a competitive selection process. Applicants had to demonstrate their workforce needs and willingness to participate.

“It is an honor to be chosen,” said ODJFS Director Cynthia Dungey. “Ohio is one of only a handful of states with a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system. That and our diverse geography put us in a unique position to contribute insights into worker turnover and staffing challenges, which impact every aspect of a child welfare agency’s work. We’re excited to help strategize solutions.”

Child welfare agencies in the following Ohio counties will partner with ODJFS in this effort: Champaign, Clark, Hamilton, Knox, Montgomery, Summit, Trumbull and Wayne. Other sites selected nationally include Louisiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Virginia, Washington, Milwaukee and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

“This was a very competitive process,” said Dr. Michelle Graef, QIC-WD director. “Ultimately, a stronger workforce with less turnover and more supportive organizational environments should improve the outcomes of the vulnerable families and children served by the child welfare system.”

The QIC-WD is led by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and includes experts in child welfare, workforce, implementation, evaluation and dissemination from partner organizations. It is committed to using the best available research from a variety of fields to identify workforce strengthening strategies.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.



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