To: PCSA Directors  
From: Jeffery Van Deusen, Deputy Director  
Office of Families and Children  
Date: July 7, 2022  
Subject: Workforce Funding Supports

**Background**

The Children Services workforce is an essential piece of achieving the best outcomes for Ohio’s children and families. Historically, turnover rates in Children Services agencies exceed typical work environments, and the current environment accentuates recruitment and retention challenges. Because of these challenges, workforce has been, and continues to be, a critical priority for The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). As our 88 counties are unique in many ways, so are the recruitment and retention challenges experienced throughout Ohio. It will take the use of many different tools to make a significant impact on workforce and recruitment, but we are excited to provide funding counties need to secure these tools!

ODJFS is providing $15 Million in funding that will be administered through the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). The primary goal is to provide Children Services agencies the flexible funding needed to implement recruitment and retention activities specific to local needs and situations. The funding to Public Children Services Agencies is intended to help implement creative solutions that will work in tandem with other state and local workforce initiatives.

**Process**

**Applying for funding:**

1. Details regarding the application process will be provided in an upcoming webinar hosted by PCSAO.
2. PCSAO will distribute an application for funding in conjunction with the upcoming webinar.
3. All applications should be submitted to: Workforce@pcsao.org.
Permitted uses of the funding include:

1. Sign-On Bonuses:
   - Implementation of sign-on bonus programs upon hire, for caseworkers.
   - Implementation of sign-on bonus programs upon completion of early hire activities, caseworkers.

2. Retention Bonuses:
   - Implementing a program providing retention bonuses for caseworkers.

3. Student Loan Repayment and/or Tuition Payments:
   - Programs reimbursing Case Aids, Caseworkers, or Supervisor for existing student loans.
   - Programs to provide tuition support to Case Aids, Caseworkers, or Supervisors to complete college coursework, professional certification, or professional training.

4. Local Workforce Media Campaigns:
   - Expenses related to local media campaigns intended support or recruit workforce.
   - Social Media Campaigns, print adds, billboards, etc.

5. Agency Culture and Climate Initiatives:
   - Expenses related to implementing any activities targeting Agency Culture and Climate.
   - Culture of Safety, Resilience Alliance, or Professional Consultants.
   - Wellness programs addressing mental, physical, and emotional health issues.

6. Flexible Work Schedule Supports:
   - Agency implementation expenses supporting flexible work schedules.
   - Equipment or other expenses related to implementing remote work, hybrid work schedules, 4-day/10-hour work week, or other flexible work schedules.

7. AVEnueS Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets:
   - Purchase of the AVEnueS Virtual Reality headset to provide an immersive experience, putting the user in the shoes of a children services caseworker.

8. Supervisor Coaching Specific to Supportive Supervision:
   - Coaching expenses specific to providing caseworker supervisors with access to coaching or training intended to build supportive supervision skillsets.

9. Referral Bonuses:
   - Employee who refers a successful recruit as well as retention for the recruit staying at 6 months and 12 months.
10. Other local strategies to support recruitment or retention of Children Services caseworkers:
   - ODJFS supports other creative solutions to recruit and retain Children Services Caseworkers. Budget and program proposals for creative local programs can be submitted for consideration and potential approval.

11. Transcription Services to increase data entry or case documentation:
   - ODJFS supports the use of SpeakWrite or other transcription services as a workforce support to increase efficiency for case documentation.

Conditions to Receive Workforce Funding:

1. The flexible funds supporting workforce recruitment and retention activities provided by ODJFS are one piece of a comprehensive approach to improving Ohio’s Children Services workforce. In order to ensure these funds are used in concert with other workforce initiatives, county agencies must participate in at least one of the statewide workforce initiatives listed below:

   - ODJFS Exit Survey: In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of why children services staff leave employment, a statewide exit survey was developed and has been available for use by all PCSAs since December 1, 2021. The Rapid Response team will analyze the data from these surveys to determine if there are any regional or statewide trends on why children services staff leave the workforce. The survey also tracks reasons staff liked working for their PCSA so that information can be used to bolster the recruitment and retention of children services employees. Having reliable and consistent data regarding turnover is critical to understand our workforce challenges and inform ways to direct resources to improve recruitment and retention.

   - AVEnueS Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets as a Pre-Hire Activity: The AVEnueS Virtual Reality headset provides an immersive experience, putting the user in the shoes of a children services caseworker. VR headsets are available at each Regional Training Center (RTC) and can be utilized as a part of the hiring process as well as for training new or experienced caseworkers.

   - Caseworker and Supervisor Onboarding: Feedback received from PCSAs and the Children Services Transformation recommendations identified the need for a consistent, statewide onboarding program for new caseworkers and supervisors. OFC began work with Accenture in May 2021 to create an online, on-demand, onboarding curriculum and platform for new PCSA caseworkers and supervisors. The onboarding curriculum is now available to all newly hired PCSA caseworkers and supervisors. The onboarding training does not replace the requirements of caseworkers and supervisors to attend Core curriculum.
**Contact**

Any questions regarding this program or PCSAO’s upcoming webinar may be submitted to [Workforce@pcsao.org](mailto:Workforce@pcsao.org).