

Preparing the Colorado Child Welfare Workforce: Organizational Commitment, Identity, and Desire to Stay


Panelists: Lara Bruce, Kate Trujillo, Anna de Guzman, Kathy Clark, and Liz Huffman

1



Presentation Agenda

2



- CO Title IV-E Partnerships
- Description of Evaluation Design, Questions, Methods
- Graduate Evaluation Findings
- Summary & Discussion

Colorado Title IV-E Partnerships

3



4

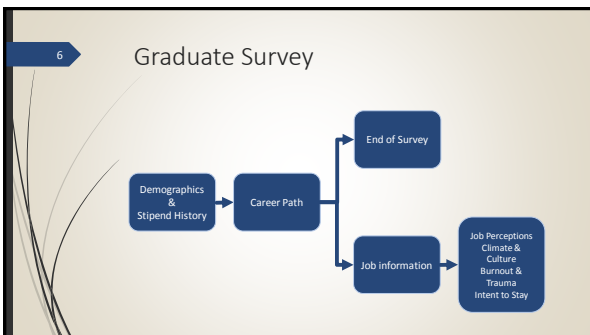
Stipend Graduates Research Questions

1. How do Colorado graduates of the stipend program experience organizational commitment?
2. How does receiving a Title IV-E stipend affect their identity as a child welfare professional?
3. How does being a Title IV-E graduate affect their desire to stay in the field?

5

Mixed Methods

- Surveys
 - 1 survey for graduates
- Focus Groups
 - 4 graduate focus groups: 2 in Denver metro area, Northeast region, Western region



7

Focus Group Questions

- Background Information
 - How long have you worked in the field of child welfare? In a Colorado county child welfare agency specifically?
- Child Welfare Professional Identity
 - Thinking back, how did being a stipend recipient influence your feelings and perceptions of entering the county child welfare workforce?
- Organizational Commitment
 - What encouraged you to stay working in a county child welfare agency (or in the field of child welfare) even after you completed the obligation?

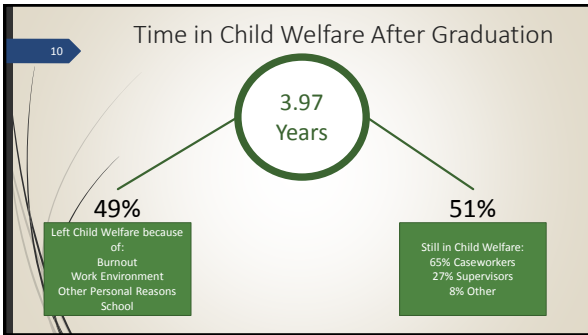
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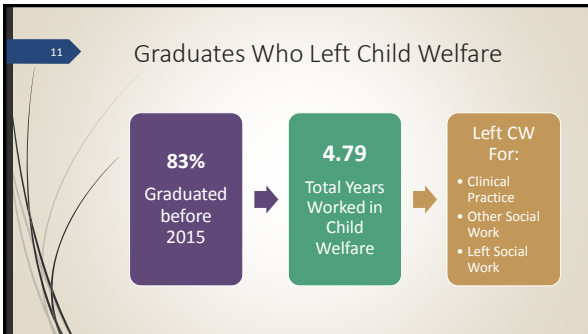
Graduate Evaluation Findings

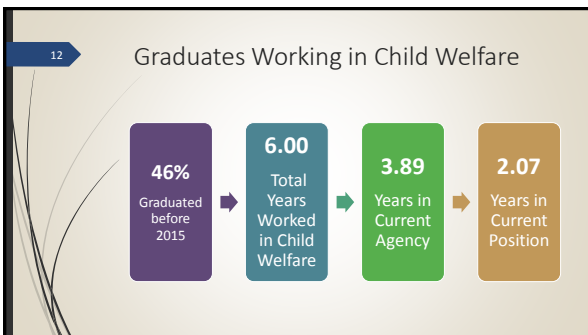
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Graduate Survey Participants

Category	Percentage
Graduated 2006-2014	63%
Age 18-34	66%
White	69%
Married or Dom. Partner	70%
MSW	90%
Payback period was expected time	94%
Female	96%








13

Competence to Confidence

- Differences between newbies and experienced staff
 - "you've got an edge over people who are just coming in fresh"
 - "get outside of what I was doing and get something new"
- Transfer learning to practice
- Knowing the work environment



14

"I'm going to graduate and you're going to pay me the same. And I'm going to have student loan debt. And then I went on to get my LCSW as well and just knowing that it's more about like you're investing in yourself. And then the agency gets a benefit because you're a better practitioner. But you don't necessarily get any incentive or any recognition or anything like that. They support you in going through the process but it's not like you get to a different pay grade or a title or anything like that. Everybody is just the same in terms of the field. And that's unfortunate."

— Stipend Graduate

Financial Support of Stipends

15

County Support

<p>While Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility with schedules & workload for employed students • Learning opportunities • Learning supports (e.g., support groups for interns) • Educational fund 	<p>After Graduation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment payback is helpful when interviewing • Lack of recognition for stipend or MSW
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16

Child Welfare Professional Identity

- Stipend and internship allowed for commitment but learned the job slowly before diving in
- Confident competence – “not willing to give that up”
- Employed students had to self-advocate for professional growth but felt strong in their identity as child welfare professionals
 - Improved their practice knowledge
 - CW courses not designed for those with expertise
 - Want more macro learning opportunities in courses and internships

17

Work Environment

Time Pressure
Workload
Work-related Burnout
Public Perception of CW
Client-related Burnout
Secondary Trauma

Self-Efficacy
Job Satisfaction
Peer Support
Organizational Climate
Prof Development
Coping Strategies

18

Burnout, Secondary Trauma, & Exposure to Violence

46% Secondary Trauma

20% Client Burnout

51% Work Burnout

68% Yelled at, shouted at, sworn at

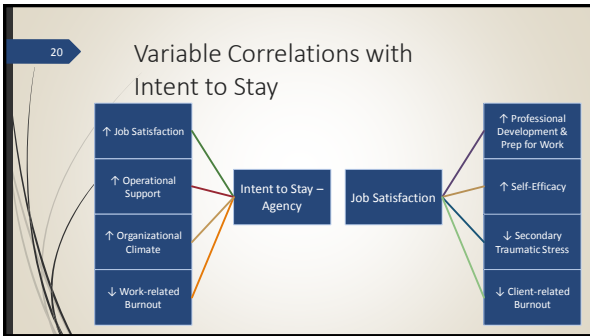
35% Threatened w/o contact

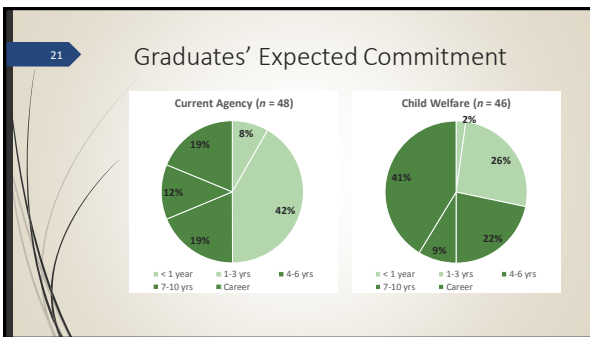
“
I think you have to have grit to be in this job. I would say child welfare isn't rocket science. It's harder.
 ”

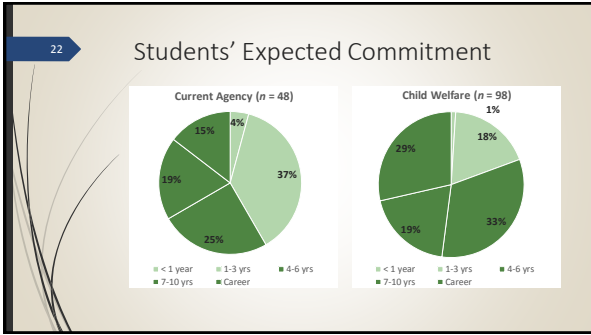
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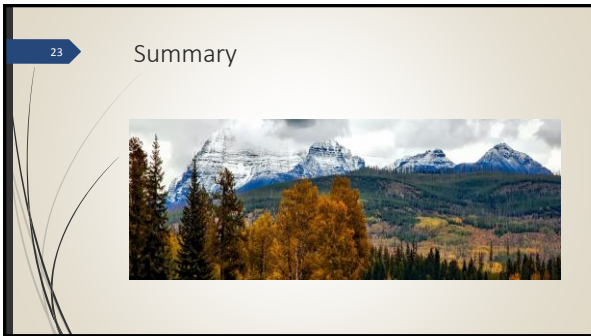
— Stipend Graduate

Peer support, lateral moves, career advancement, and changing counties mediated burnout and turnover according to graduates who participated in focus groups.









24

State & County Perspectives

25

Discussion Questions

- How can counties (in CO, employers for casework staff) support & encourage degree advancement to help maintain workers in child welfare?
- How can universities and the state (IV-E agent for stipends) help support and grow internships and internship programs in counties?
- What are next steps for the committee?
 - Focus of another study?



Colorado Title IV-E

Findings from the 2018 Stipend Graduates Study

Butler Institute for Families | University of Denver



Acknowledgments

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Special thanks to graduates of the Colorado Title IV-E child welfare stipend program. They contributed their stories and their time to take surveys and to participate in focus group; they also helped contact their peers to forward the word about the study. Also, thank you to Laura Kelch at the Butler Institute for Families for helping the team in a pinch by organizing and conducting the focus groups.

Principal Authors:

Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver:

Anna de Guzman | Anna.deGuzman@du.edu

Miriam Estrada | Miriam.Estrada@du.edu

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Kate Trujillo, PhD, LCSW | ktruji21@msudenver.edu

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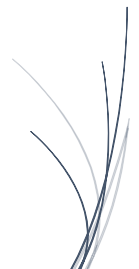
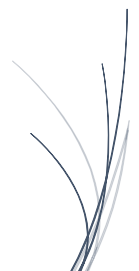


Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Study Information	4
Research Questions Included:.....	5
Methods	5
Data Analysis.....	6
Quantitative Data.....	6
Qualitative Data	7
Results.....	8
Participants	8
Stipend Experience	9
Financial Support of Title IV-E Stipends.....	10
County Support during Program	12
Employment Obligation	14
County Support after Graduation	15
Child Welfare Professional Identity	16
Organizational Environment	17
Organizational Climate.....	17
Job Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy.....	18
Work Conditions	18
The Impact of Child Welfare Work	19
Peer Support	20
Organizational Commitment.....	21
Summary	25
Appendix A: 2018 Graduate Survey Item-Level Means	28
Appendix B: 2018 Graduate Survey Scale-Level Means	34
Appendix C: Focus Group Questions.....	35





Introduction

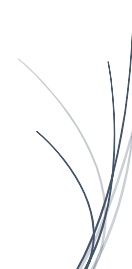
The training provision of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, created as part of the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act of 1980 [P.L. 96-272], allowed the use of public funding to support staff professional development and the opportunity for current and prospective employees to earn Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) degrees. These public funds support partnerships between state and local child welfare agencies and schools of social work to collaborate in providing specialized child welfare education programs that prepare a new generation of social workers to pursue a child welfare career path. In Colorado, the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) has partnered with University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work (DU GSSW) and Metropolitan State University of Denver Department of Social Work (MSU Denver) to award Title IV-E child welfare stipends since 1995 to BSW and MSW students. In 2016, university partners were expanded to include Colorado State University at Fort Collins and at Pueblo to educate more BSW and MSW students to pursue child welfare careers throughout Colorado.

Since 1995, the state of Colorado has awarded over \$2,000,000 in Title IV-E child welfare stipends to MSU Denver and DU GSSW social work majors who have completed their child welfare courses. Students must apply through each university's social work program and compete to receive the child welfare stipend. The stipend program provides an opportunity for students to gain knowledge and experience in child welfare practice and to secure at least an entry-level position with a local department of human/social services. The stipend program is also an opportunity for those already working in child welfare to increase their knowledge and improve their practice with children and families. Through a competitive application and interview process, select recipients receive stipends in amounts ranging from \$5,000–\$14,000 to help toward tuition costs for one academic year.

For the current study, stipend program coordinators from DU GSSW and MSU Denver gathered information on their stipend graduates, including information on when they received stipends, when they graduated, their current contact information, and post-graduation employment information, if known. From fall 2005 through spring 2017, 245 individuals who received a Title IV-E stipend from the state were identified as participants for the study. Because 40 individuals received more than one stipend (for both their BSW and MSW degrees), there have been 285 stipends awarded. Of the stipends awarded, 25% were for BSWs only, 2% for both BSW and MSW, and 73% for MSWs. Of the individual students, 46% graduated from MSU Denver and 54% graduated from DU.

Study Information

In the fall of 2017, the Butler Institute for Families at DU GSSW, in collaboration with MSU Denver, proposed to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the stipend program on student retention in child



welfare in Colorado by tracking stipend students who graduated in the past 10 years (from 2006 to 2016), both BSW and MSW graduates, from DU's and MSU Denver's social work programs. This was expected to be an initial study, tracking stipend graduates' retention in child welfare. At the end of this initial study, the Butler Institute planned to submit a report to include initial findings from this study and opportunities for improvement in procedures, processes, staff capacity, and training to support the delivery of the stipend program and workforce retention. In addition, the evaluation team would recommend additional foci for future stipend program evaluations.

Research Questions Included:

1. What does the research and practice literature say about workforce recruitment and retention strategies and the influence of organizational commitment on the child welfare workforce that informs Colorado's stipend program?
2. How do Colorado graduates of the stipend program experience organizational commitment?
3. How does receiving a Title IV-E stipend affect their identity as a child welfare professional? How does being a Title IV-E graduate affect their desire to stay in the field?

Methods

The evaluation included a review of existing research, reports, and other applicable materials, as well as compiling a database of stipend program graduates from DU GSSW and MSU Denver from the past 10 years and gathering feedback through survey and focus group methodology. Evaluators from the Butler Institute for Families collaborated with stipend program coordinators in conducting a literature review and met regularly to discuss the findings in order to inform a collaborative effort in developing measures for the survey and questions for focus groups, and in reaching out to contact stipend graduates. Literature review and measures development occurred from November 2017 to April 2018. The 2018 Colorado Stipend Graduate Survey was finalized in April 2018 and administered via Qualtrics software, Version April 2018, Copyright ©2018. Table 1 lists the measures include in the survey at the individual, unit, organizational, and community levels.



TABLE 1: SURVEY MEASURES

Individual Factors	Unit-Level Factors	Organizational Factors	Community-Level Factors
Self-Efficacy	Peer Support	Organizational Climate	Public Perceptions of Child Welfare
Job Satisfaction		Professional Development	
Intent to Stay			
Secondary Trauma			
Burnout			
Coping Skills			
Time Pressure			
Social Work Education			
Exposure to Violence			

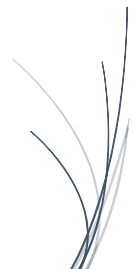
The evaluation team administered the online survey to **202** stipend graduates out of the 245 for whom e-mail addresses were available. Other survey outreach methods included posting on social media and asking graduates to forward to their contact lists. The survey was open from May 1, 2018, to June 30, 2018. A \$10 incentive (Amazon e-gift card) was provided to those who completed the survey. Following initial survey administration, several reminder e-mails were sent to encourage participation. All responses were kept confidential by researchers, and individuals' identifying information were replaced with ID numbers so as not to link back to the staff member; responses are only reported in aggregate in this report. Invitations to participate in a focus group were e-mailed to the same group in April 2018, with a particular focus on those currently working in child welfare. Focus groups were conducted in May 2018 (two in the Denver metro area, one in the Northeast region, and one virtually for those in Western counties); after participating in a focus group, participants were e-mailed a \$30 incentive (Amazon e-gift card). The full measure, with average scores and standard deviations, as well as a sample of the focus group questions, can be found in Appendices A–C.

Data Analysis

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Quantitative data from the survey were exported to *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)*, where they were coded and analyzed. Descriptive statistics were run on all data sets and are reported as mean, or average, scores (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*).¹ The mean scores for all of the survey items are included in Appendix A while means scores for all domains are included in Appendix B and specific results are referred to throughout these findings. Unless otherwise noted, the following 5-point scales reported mean scores and standard deviations throughout the report.

¹ A standard deviation indicates the level of variation in the responses. Higher standard deviations indicate more variation and lower standard deviations indicate less variation.



Frequency Scale

- 1** = Almost Never
- 2** = Sometimes (about 25% of the time)
- 3** = About Half the Time
- 4** = Usually (about 75% of the time)
- 5** = Almost Always

Agreement Scale

- 1** = Strongly Disagree
- 2** = Disagree
- 3** = Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4** = Agree
- 5** = Strongly Agree

Satisfaction Scale

- 1** = Very Dissatisfied
- 2** = Dissatisfied
- 3** = Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
- 4** = Satisfied
- 5** = Very Satisfied

QUALITATIVE DATA

All focus data files were transcribed, with participant name removed, and exported into ATLAS.ti 8.2.33, a qualitative data-analysis program for coding and analysis. Data were analyzed using evaluative coding² and initial or open coding.³ This means that coding was designed to answer specific assessment questions while also remaining open to ideas that emerged from the data. Evaluators at the Butler Institute for Families and MSU Denver conducted the coding and analyses.

² Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

³ Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.





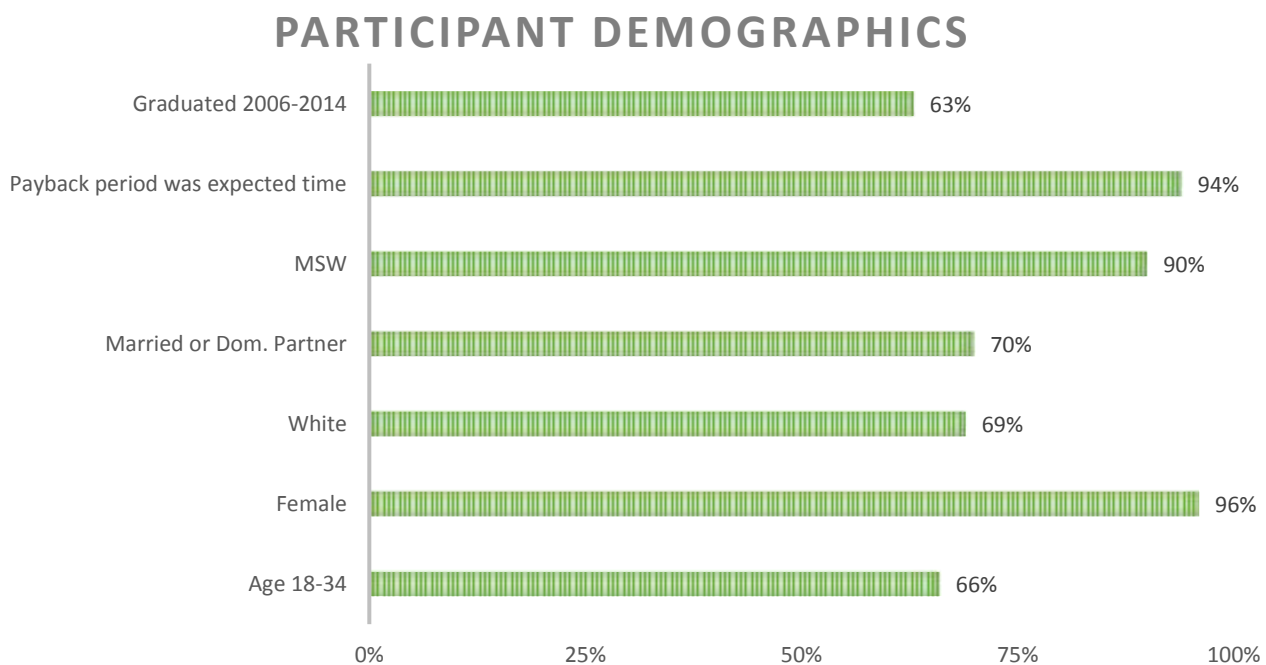
Results

The following section presents findings from the 2018 Colorado Stipend Graduate Survey and focus groups. While the study was limited at first for graduates from 2006-2016, participants who graduated in 2017 were accepted and included in the results. Results are reported in aggregate and quotations are de-identified for the protection of participants. This study, including protocols and measures, was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of University of Denver.

Participants

In total, 97 stipend graduates partially or fully completed a survey (40% response rate) and 18 participated in a focus group. Of the survey participants, 90% had received a stipend for their MSW, 8% for their BSW, and 2% for both; in addition, 68% had graduated from DU GSSW and 28% from MSU Denver (4% from both universities). Demographics of the survey respondents indicated that 66% were between the ages of 18 and 34, 96% were female, and 70% were married or had a domestic partner (see Figure 1 for more demographic data).

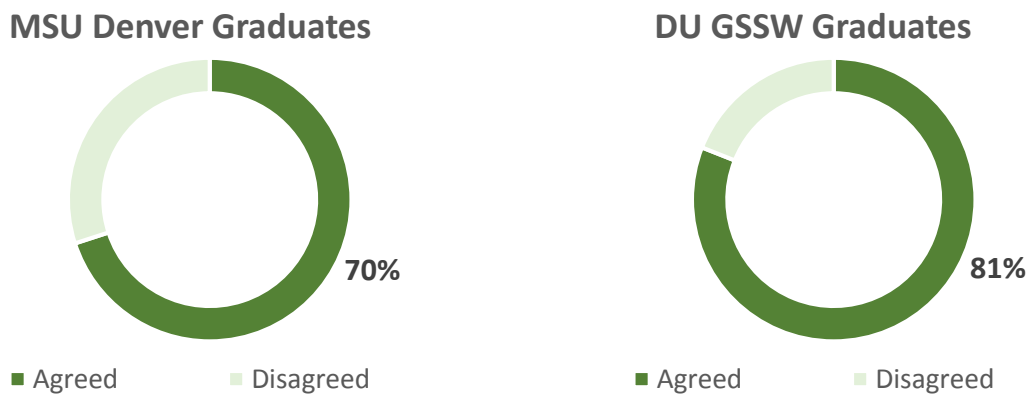
FIGURE 1: STIPEND GRADUATES' DEMOGRAPHICS (N = 97)



Stipend Experience

Graduates had high praise for their educational programs when they were receiving their stipends, especially for their internship experience at county child welfare agencies, and felt strongly that their social work education prepared them for their current job (see Figure 2). Survey respondents indicated high ratings of agreement with the *Social Work Education* scale ($M(52) = 4.11, SD = 0.49$). Higher-rated items in the scale indicated that the majority of graduates agreed that their field experience was relevant to their work ($M(52) = 4.33, SD = 0.76$) and that their current position allowed them to use their social work knowledge and skills ($M(52) = 4.33, SD = 0.65$). There was not a significant difference between MSU Denver and DU GSSW graduates in their level of satisfaction and perceived usefulness of their social work education.

FIGURE 2: PERCENT AGREED ON ITEM: “MY SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM PREPARED ME FOR MY CURRENT POSITION”



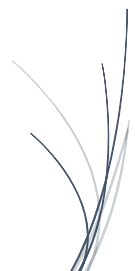
Focus group participants agreed that their internship experience prepared them for child welfare work; one graduate said, *“I feel like if you’ve done an internship and then you get hired I feel like you’ve got an edge over people who are just coming in fresh.”* For those who were already working in child welfare, getting the opportunity to learn a different area of child welfare was also helpful, *“it was super important to me to get outside of what I was doing and get something new. So I was very intentional about my internship.”* Another graduate mentioned that doing their internship in a different area broadened their understanding of their agency and that it allowed for opportunities to collaborate and network with different teams. However, they also acknowledged that others had different experiences in their internship, due to not receiving the preferred internship (and therefore the learning experiences) they had hoped for and to a lack of a supportive supervisor.

Stipend graduates shared that their internship experiences led to better practice with children and families as well as improved knowledge of agency culture and environment. One graduate spoke about how learning about *“theories and the history . . . made such a difference in my practice”* while another one said that getting their MSW and doing their internship opened up *“a different way of seeing the world and it definitely, as you said, impacted my practice immediately.”* For graduates who were new to child welfare, they felt that their experiences in being selected and going through the internship gave them a *“soft entrance”* to the agency where *“you’re figuring out the agency, who are the people, who is in leadership, who are the supervisors, who are the workers. So it’s just even getting your bearings on the organization like how does the organization operate, let alone the job.”* Another benefit to their experiences was that they felt more confident in interviewing for jobs because they had gained experience through their internship, training through the Intern Academy (similar to job training requirement for all new Colorado caseworkers) for more recent graduates, and proven commitment because of the employment obligation.

Students participating in the focus group also identified areas for improvement in their MSW and BSW programs. Namely, graduates would have liked the option to take classes outside of child welfare–specific course work (particularly for advanced standing students). Graduates also wanted more of a voice in determining their internship placement and areas of particular focus. Particularly for graduates who were already working in the field, reconfiguring the internship to provide opportunities for learning outside of their focus area would be of great value. As one stipend graduate explained, *“I am forever grateful for that experience. But, yeah it felt a little silly to have worked for six years, do an internship at my place of employment where then I was, also, still working.”*

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF TITLE IV-E STIPENDS

The Colorado Title IV-E child welfare stipends offset some of the tuition costs for students, but did not cover the full cost of tuition, especially at the University of Denver, a private university. Graduates



compared the cost of their degrees and the ways that the stipend program supported the costs. The following table offers a comparison of how the stipend program offset tuition costs for the sample of graduates in this study. Graduates noted that the school, their degree program, their tax rate, and whether or not they had to pay taxes on their stipend dramatically affected the amount of personal debt they incurred.

TABLE 2: ANNUAL COST OF TUITION AND STIPEND COVERAGE FOR FULL-TIME MSW DEGREE⁴

	Cost of TUITION* (not including fees or other expenses)	Average STIPEND for urban county	Percent Covered by Stipend	TUITION* amount left to student	Taxes
DU	\$47,520 (2016–17)	\$14,000	29%	\$33,520	No
MSU Denver	\$13,656 (2017–18)	\$10,500	77%	\$3,156	Yes

*In this table, tuition refers to onsite tuition for one year, not including fees or other expenses (the cost for online programs differ).

Stipend graduates shared concerns about their investments in the stipend program and their return on investment. When discussing student loans, graduates expressed concern about their debt and lack of additional opportunities for advancement with an MSW. One graduate commented, *“so if there’s not any distinguishment between having your master’s versus just like undergrad we’re taking on that additional debt because we want to do this. But then what are the benefits for doing that in this field?”* Another graduate noted, *“I’ve even advised people don’t get your MSW if you’re going to stay in child welfare. If you want to do something else, then get it. But you’re going to waste your money to get an MSW to work in child welfare. I’m proud that I got it because my undergrad wasn’t a BSW. Mine was in criminal justice. So with me, I feel like it had a purpose. But, yeah, if you’re already in a field don’t go get [it] if you want to stay in the field.”*

In general, graduates voiced their frustration about their student debt, but overall acknowledged that pursuing their BSW and/or MSW degrees had benefits. One graduate commented, *“I’m going to graduate and*

⁴ The DU GSSW and MSU Denver cost information can be found in the following websites:
<https://www.du.edu/socialwork/admission/msw/costmsw.html>;
<https://msudenver.edu/media/content/departmentsocialwork/MSWProgramCostInformation.pdf>



you're going to pay me the same. And I'm going to have student loan debt. And then I went on to get my LCSW as well and just knowing that it's more about like you're investing in yourself. And then the agency gets a benefit because



you're a better practitioner. But you don't necessarily get any incentive or any recognition or anything like that. They support you in going through the process but it's not like you get to a different pay grade or a title or anything like that. Everybody is just the same in terms of the field. And that's unfortunate." However, graduates acknowledged that there were non-financial returns to having earned an MSW such as being a part of a professional learning community: *"The money was a lot but the relationships and like the ongoing connection I've had to those folks has been really valuable in my career because I've been able to do lots of things outside of my position, which I think has also kind of kept me invigorated."*

COUNTY SUPPORT DURING PROGRAM

Overall, stipend graduates had high praise for the various ways they felt the counties supported them during the internships. For those who were already employed, they appreciated the opportunity to work on a flexible schedule to allow for protected time to fulfill their internship and the ability to fulfill work hours on weekends. Both those who were already employed and those new to child welfare appreciated the supportive learning opportunities in their internships, including quality supervision, intern "support groups," and networking opportunities (particularly for employed students because they were able to learn different areas of child welfare).

Table 3 summarizes the themes identified from graduates' feedback on county support during their programs.

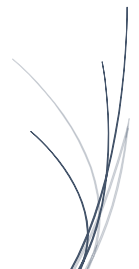


TABLE 3: COUNTY SUPPORT DURING PROGRAM THEMES

Theme	Quotes from Graduates
<p>Flexibility Graduates who were employed during the stipend program could accommodate their caseloads and schedules with help from supervisors and colleagues.</p>	<p><i>“I had a lower caseload. I just think support. I think at the time I was working with a different supervisor and that person was really understanding.”</i></p> <p><i>“In order for me to finish my program . . . I’m going to have to go to four tens which was completely unheard of. And they let me. And I wouldn’t have been able to do the program had they not been—if they had not supported me in doing that.”</i></p> <p><i>“My coworkers really helped me [with] scheduling.”</i></p>
<p>Educational Fund Refund or funds were available to some graduates who were employed to cover partial educational expenses.</p>	<p><i>“Denver County often offers an educational refund. So they’ll refund I think it was up to \$1,500.”</i></p> <p><i>“So I was able to access that when I was in school, as well, which was great. I felt like that was a huge incentive.”</i></p>
<p>Learning Opportunities Internships provided all graduates with the ability to learn about different programs and build a network within and across child welfare.</p>	<p><i>“They were just really open to letting me explore and learn different sides of the child welfare programs and that was really neat and supportive.”</i></p> <p><i>“I walked in and already had a team and I already had a network of people that I knew at both locations and people I could turn to.”</i></p> <p><i>“I built a really awesome relationship with child welfare concentration folks at DU. And they have been a big part and continue to be a part of my career.”</i></p> <p><i>“MSU actually allowed me to kind of do some of my internship in a macro fashion, which I was grateful for because then I was able to get what I was needing for where I was at in my career.”</i></p>
<p>Learning Supports Graduates mentioned several supports during their educational programs, such as BSW and MSW support groups, a culture of support from employers if they were already working in child welfare, and supportive internship supervisors and colleagues.</p>	<p><i>“My supervisor, at the time, as well was great about understanding that I was in two different roles when I was there. So that was helpful.”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m really grateful that my county let me [get] my master’s and everything. I feel a very big sense of loyalty for that.”</i></p> <p><i>“There’s no way I would’ve been able to do the program without the support of my county.”</i></p> <p><i>“I had a great internship because I had a really invested internship supervisor.”</i></p> <p><i>“In Jeff Co they did have a master’s program and a bachelor’s program support group.”</i></p>

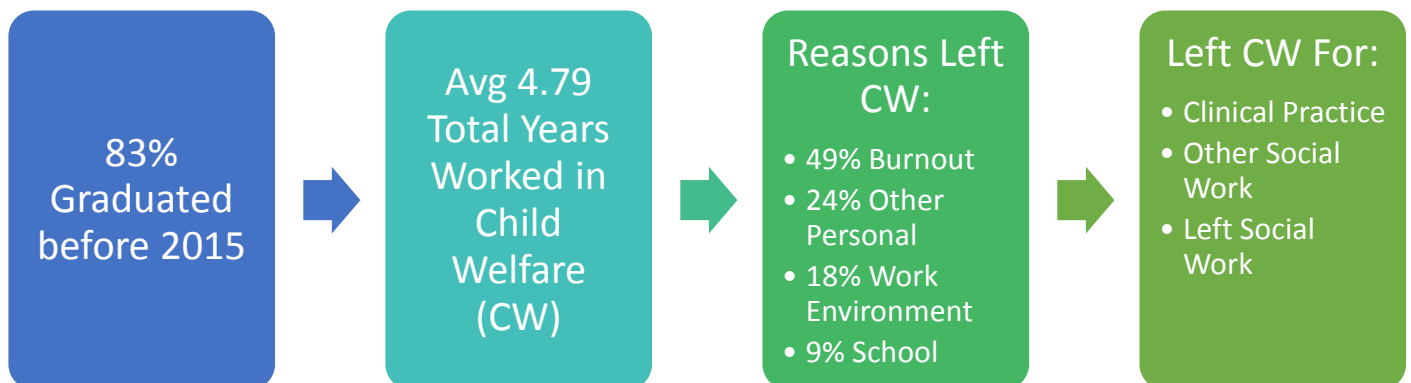


EMPLOYMENT OBLIGATION

Of the 97 survey respondents, 86% reported they had completed their work obligation in child welfare and another 6% were in the process of completing their employment obligation, indicating that the stipend program allowed for 92% of graduates to commit to children and families for one to two years, not including tenure on the job or internships. However, 5% either deferred or decided to pay back the amount owed. Not including previous work experience, **graduates stayed an average of 2.78 years to pay back their employment obligation after graduating before moving on to a different position, job, or field outside of child welfare.** Of those who remained in child welfare after their employment obligation, 40% were still in their same position as of the survey date, 14% made a lateral move for their second job, and 46% promoted to a higher child welfare position for their second job. Of the 71 graduates who reported 2 or more position changes since graduating, 42% were no longer in child welfare positions by their second job. **The average amount of time graduates spent working in child welfare, after graduating from their stipend program, was 3.97 years.**

Only **51% of survey respondents indicated they were currently working in a child welfare position** (either for a public, private, or tribal agency) while 21% were currently in a social work–related position, 26% left child welfare work, and 2% were unemployed. **Of the 49% who reported they were no longer working in child welfare, they had spent an average of 4.79 years in their child welfare career**, including an average of 4.77 years in child welfare after graduating from their program. **For the 51% who were currently working in child welfare, they have spent an average of 6.00 years in their child welfare career, at their current agency for an average of 3.89 years, and in their current position for an average of 2.07 years.** In comparison, a caseworker retention study in Colorado indicated that for caseworkers currently working in 11 counties, their average child welfare tenure was 7.4 years and average current position tenure was 3.4 years (4.1 years in their immediate previous child welfare position).⁵

FIGURE 3: CAREER TRAJECTORY OF GRADUATES NOT CURRENTLY WORKING IN CHILD WELFARE



⁵ Raven, D., Winokur, M., Holmquist-Johnson, H., & Kenyon, V. (2018). *Caseworker Retention Survey Report: Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH) Project*. Retrieved from Colorado State University College of Health and Human Sciences School of Social Work's Social Work Research Center website: <http://www.ssw.chhs.colostate.edu/research/swrc/files/ARCH%20Caseworker%20Retention%20Survey%20Final%20Report.pdf>

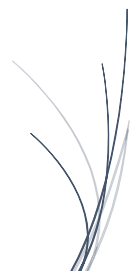
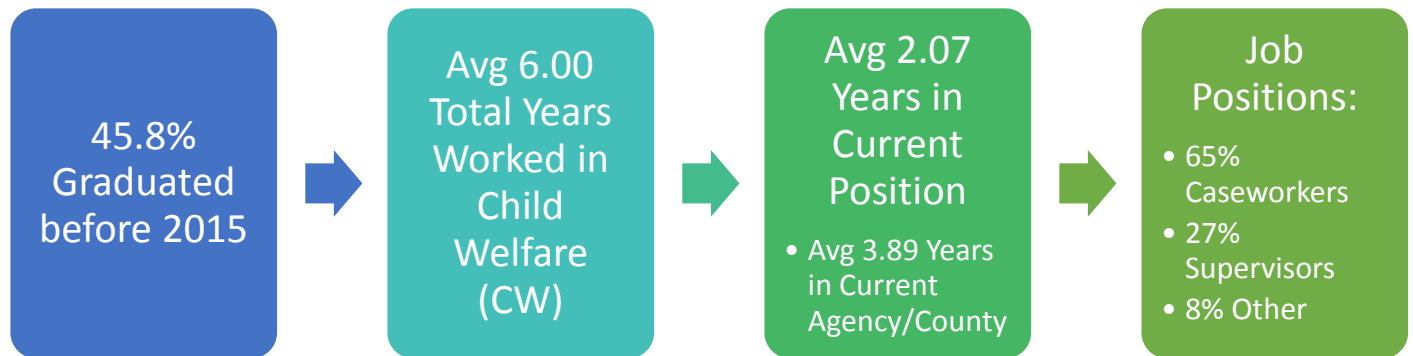


FIGURE 4: CAREER TRAJECTORY OF GRADUATES CURRENTLY WORKING IN CHILD WELFARE

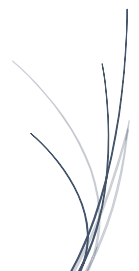


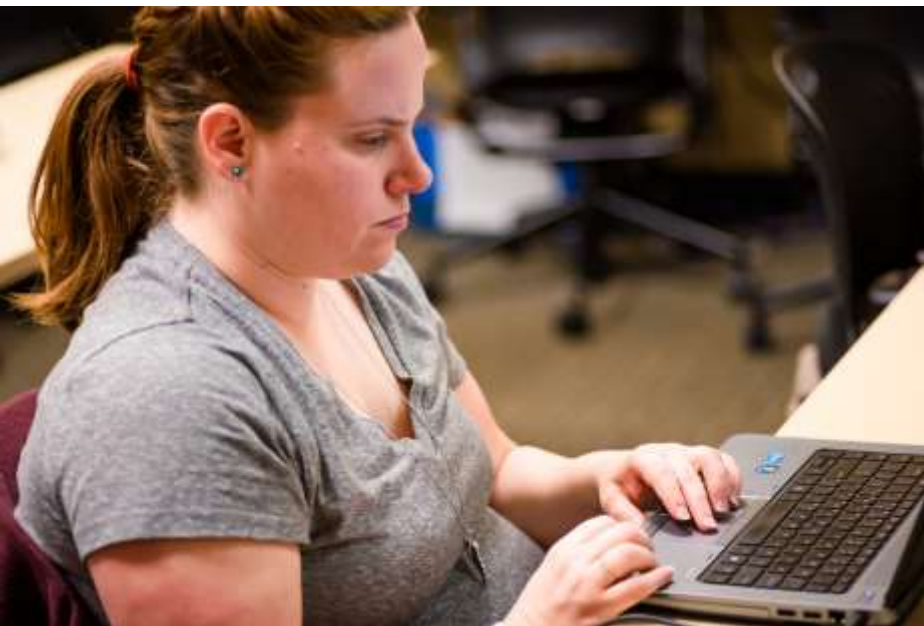
COUNTY SUPPORT AFTER GRADUATION

While graduates appreciated the knowledge and experience they gained from participating in the MSW program, they did not feel that their degree program or participating in the stipend program meaningfully set them apart from others in the field or advanced their careers. They described a lack of recognition on the part of their counties, the same pay as others or no increase in pay after they completed the program, a lack of incentives to receiving a degree, and a lack of advancement or employment opportunities.

Some graduates did feel like receiving a graduate degree and/or being part of the stipend program helped to some degree in the hiring process; however, others felt like they did not receive any additional employment opportunities. One graduate stated, *“I think it goes to speak of just even getting your degree there’s not really recognition [from] the county. Like having an MSW, let alone receiving a stipend, I think that counties just need workers.”* Others who had been involved in hiring processes mentioned, *“I think it’s hard because we look at an MSW and the stipend in the interview process. But once you’re hired it makes no difference.”* Others expressed frustration in the lack of advancement opportunities even after being a part of the stipend program, *“Some people mentioned before that it doesn’t seem to make a huge difference sometimes when you’re using that as leverage maybe for a promotion or something like that.”* Others added that they did not include the stipend program on their resume because of the lack of recognition, *“It’s more either the time you’ve put in or what you’ve done while you’ve been there versus the actual education background. And I don’t even think on my résumé it says stipend student either.”*

Another reoccurring theme was that graduates wanted to see more incentives for gaining their degrees, such as a bonus from their counties or a matching scholarship to go along with the stipend, *“Not that I’m expecting a pay raise, but, you know, something like that, like some kind of incentive for getting your master’s might be helpful beyond just having the stipend.”*



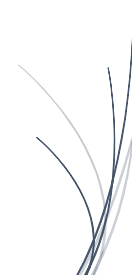


The combined frustrations resulting from a lack of recognition resulted in some graduates regretting the decision to pursue a graduate degree, particularly for those who had incurred debt while pursuing their degree, *“I’ve got to say I wish I had not gotten my MSW. Honestly. There has been no benefit. I think practice-wise probably I did, I got something out of it. But it has not helped my career at all. And I just have tons of debt now.”*

CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

When asked what influence the stipend had on their identity, focus group participants had mixed responses that often depended on whether they were already working in child welfare when they received their stipend. For those new to child welfare, the stipend allowed them to transition and build their commitment to child welfare by allowing them to learn the job in their classes and through the internship, which built up their confidence in their ability to do the job, for example, *“it gave me a way of leaving my job that had nothing to do with child welfare and transitioning slowly into this work and be comfortable before I started it full-time.”* Another participant noted, *“once you have that competency like I’m not willing to give that up. The confidence I have now to make decisions, to resolve crises, to feel confident in making really big decisions, that’s a huge part of my identity, who I am. I can’t really picture stepping away from that.”*

However, those who had been working in child welfare had mixed responses. Generally, they felt that their professional identity was already in place due to their level of experience and that receiving the stipend recognized their professional child welfare experience. Some felt that receiving the stipend constrained them to the child welfare concentration track and felt a lack of professional development in their internship experience. Others felt that getting their MSWs and completing the obligation helped to boost their identity and commitment to child welfare, though they did have to self-advocate with their social work programs and their agencies to allow them different internship opportunities to be able to grow (e.g., macro-level work or interning in different areas of child welfare). One graduate shared, *“I feel like doing the clinical concentration in child welfare and then having the stipend available it was just kind of like a combination of everything together. But really helped me to recognize child welfare*



is where I'm meant to be. . . . I have deep gratitude that the stipend program is available because I really believe in child welfare. And I also believe in advancing your education to be an even better child welfare practitioner."

Organizational Environment

Several sections in the survey were specific only to those who were currently employed in order to gain their perspectives on their work environment and other perceptions of working in child welfare. Of the 48 survey respondents who reported they were working in child welfare, 65% were caseworkers, 27% were supervisors, and 8% in other positions (e.g., training and recruiting). About 85% were working in public child welfare and the rest were working in private, federal, or other types of agencies. Most worked in urban settings in Colorado (91%), while others worked in rural areas (9%); a few were working in other states, but they were not included in the survey analyses.

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

The Organizational Climate scale measures to what extent graduates felt about their overall work climate, which is divided into eight subscales of individual and organizational perceptions (see



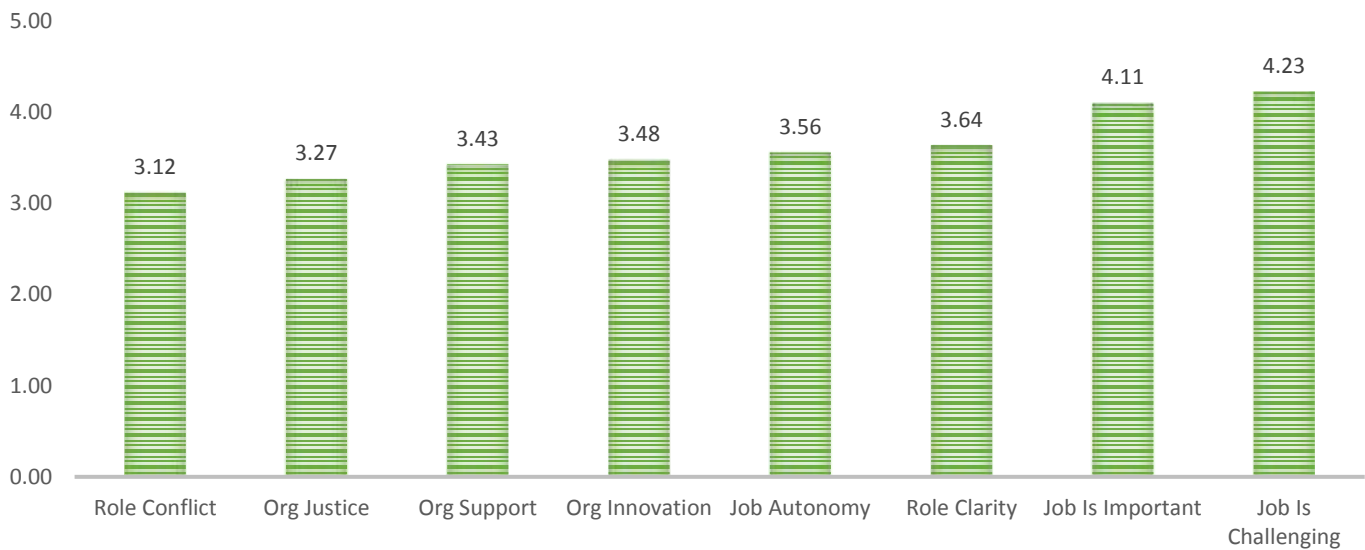
Figure 5). Graduates endorsed that their jobs are meaningful and important, that their jobs are complex and challenging, that their responsibilities and expectations are defined, and that there was fairly low conflict in how they are able to do their work. However, they were less likely to agree that they had a lot of freedom and autonomy in their work, that their organization encourages innovation, that their organization supports fair and open decision-making, and that their organization is supportive of them.

In addition to their perceptions of the climate in their county agency, graduates reported a low public perception of child welfare work, ($M(46) = 2.91$, $SD = 0.37$), indicating that they feel the general public does not have a very positive opinion of child welfare work or workers. They also reported somewhat high time pressure, indicating

that they felt that they have too much to do in their workload and are generally too busy to be effective ($M(47) = 3.60$, $SD = 0.96$).



FIGURE 5: RATINGS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE SUBSCALES (N = 51)



JOB SATISFACTION AND SELF-EFFICACY

With this small sample, findings indicate that graduates were generally satisfied with their current jobs ($M(46) = 3.94$, $SD = 0.61$) and felt highly effective and knowledgeable about their jobs ($M(46) = 4.26$, $SD = 0.45$). The strongest endorsed items in the *Job Satisfaction* scale indicated that 83% of graduates in child welfare had a feeling of success and accomplishment in their job and that 93% liked their coworkers. On the *Self-Efficacy* scale, 98% of graduates agreed that they have the necessary skills to do their job effectively and 98% agreed that they are effective and confident in doing their job. There were no significant differences by position type (caseworkers and supervisors) or years in the agency.

All graduates agreed that their social work education was relevant and has been helpful toward their work in child welfare (*Perceptions of Social Work Education* scale, $M(47) = 4.11$, $SD = 0.51$). For caseworkers, they felt that training and other professional development were relevant and prepared them for the job (*Professional Development and Preparation for Work* scale, $M(28) = 3.67$, $SD = 0.54$). In particular, 93% agreed that they use the skills learned in training on the job, and 86% agreed that their supervisors supported their attendance at child welfare trainings. About 68% agreed that their supervisor have encouraged them to use skills learned in training in their job, while 71% agreed that trainings have improved their ability to do their job.

WORK CONDITIONS

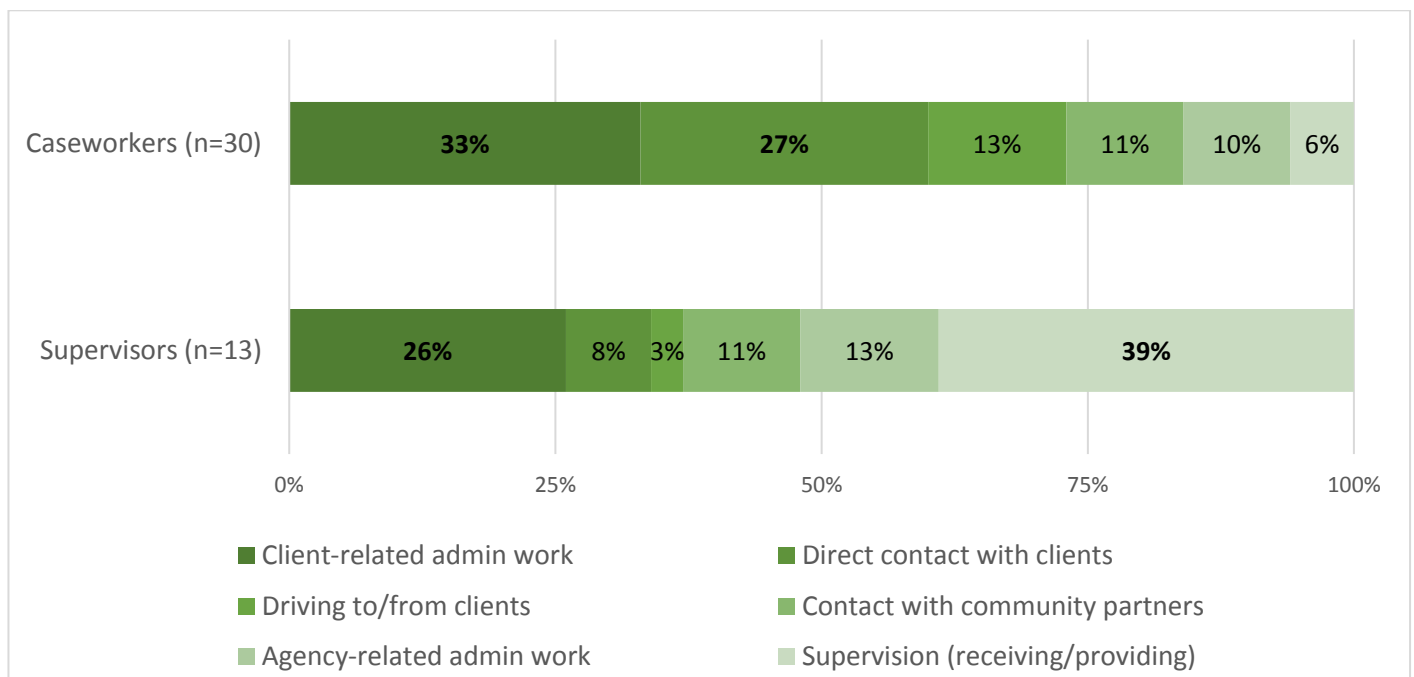
THERE WERE SEVERAL MEASURES IN THE SURVEY THAT ASSESSED THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS THAT AFFECTED THEIR JOB, SUCH AS TIME PRESSURE, PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE, SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS, CLIENT-RELATED BURNOUT, WORK-RELATED BURNOUT, AND EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE. GRADUATES AGREED TO SOME EXTENT THAT THEY FACED TIME PRESSURE TO DO THEIR JOB AND ACCOMPLISH TASKS AND HAD A HIGH WORKLOAD ($M(46) = 3.60$, $SD = 0.96$). WHILE THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN RATINGS BETWEEN CASEWORKERS AND SUPERVISORS



ON TIME PRESSURE, THERE WERE DIFFERENCES IN HOW CASEWORKERS AND SUPERVISORS SPENT THEIR AVERAGE TIME ON TASKS, AS SEEN IN

Figure 6. Of those who work directly with children and families, 54% indicated their caseload was about right and 36% reported their caseload was too high. Graduates reported that in their current caseload, 72% of cases were of usual difficulty and 28% were exceptionally challenging.

FIGURE 6: PERCENTAGE OF TIME TO TASKS FOR CASEWORKERS AND SUPERVISORS

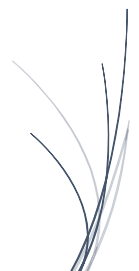


THE IMPACT OF CHILD WELFARE WORK

Developers of the *Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS)* have indicated that the range of possible scores are from a minimum of 17 to a maximum of 85 and scores above **38** indicate that those individuals are experiencing PTSD symptoms.⁶ Scores on the STSS showed that **about half, 46%, of graduates who work directly with children and families received a score of 38 or higher, indicating PTSD-level symptoms due to secondary traumatic stress** because of their work with traumatized families. The overall mean on STSS was 36.06 (*SD* = 10.92). There was no significant difference between caseworkers with 3 years or less of child welfare experience and those with more than 3 years of experience.

In follow-up questions to the STSS, 71% reported they have previously experienced a traumatic event in their life. While that event occurred over a year ago for most (92%), 76% reported it still affected

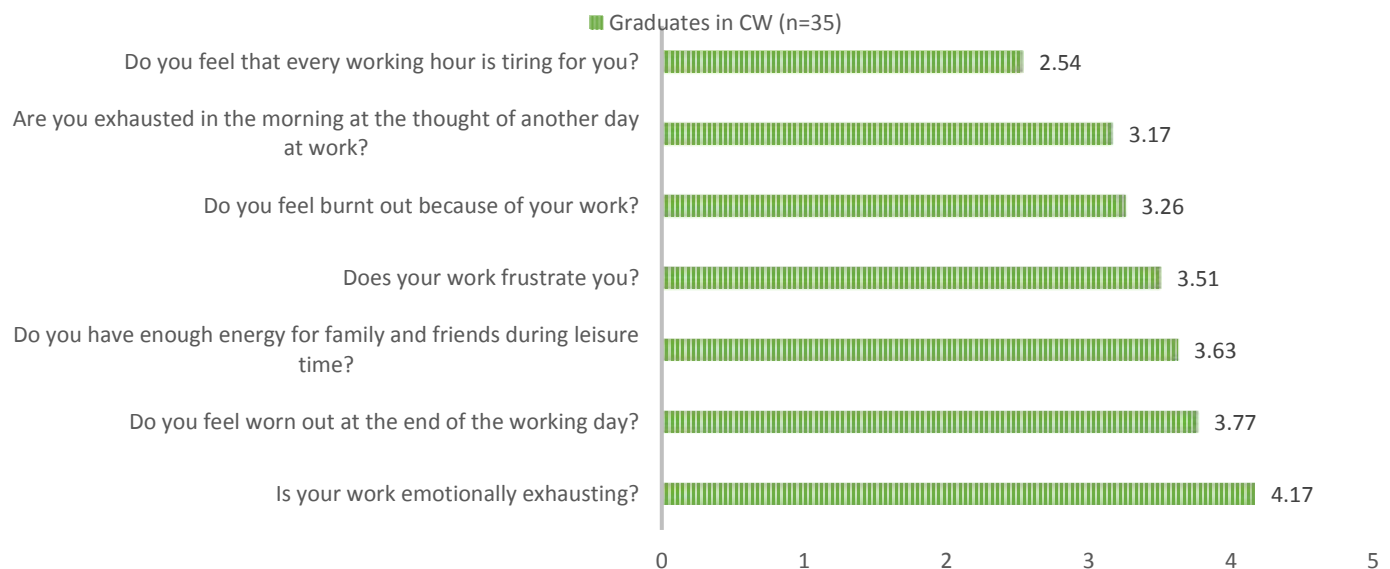
⁶ Bride, B. E., Robinson, M. M., Yegidis, B., & Figley, C. R. (2004). Development and validation of the secondary traumatic stress scale. *Research on Social Work Practice, 14*(1), 27–35.



them mildly and 20% moderately. Nearly two-thirds, 66%, reported that their work with clients often addressed issues related to client traumas. In addition to working with clients' trauma, the *Exposure to Violence* scale indicated that in the past six months, workers had dealt with some level of violence from their clients or someone in the clients' households: 68% reported being yelled at, shouted at, or sworn at, and 35% were threatened by a client without physical contact.

On average, graduates reported higher *Work-Related Burnout* ($M(33) = 55.74, SD = 18.27$) than they did *Client-Related Burnout* ($M(33) = 41.79, SD = 12.65$). Only 14% of those working directly with clients often felt that working with clients drained their energy, while 74% often found their work emotionally exhausting and 66% often felt worn out at the end of the day. There was not a statistically significant difference between caseworkers with more than 3 years of child welfare experience and those with 3 years or less on *Work-Related Burnout* (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7: ITEM MEANS ON WORK-RELATED BURNOUT



Despite the challenges of working with children and families in need, graduates reported they were engaging in *Coping Strategies* about half the time (5-point frequency scale, $M(35) = 3.57, SD = 0.68$). Graduates felt they had a strong understanding of the effects of their exposure to vicarious trauma (83%), and 74% usually/almost always practiced physical self-care. In terms of support as a coping strategy, only 49% often felt supported by their supervisor in their self-care plan, but 74% debriefed with peers and 86% used humor as part of their self-care.

PEER SUPPORT

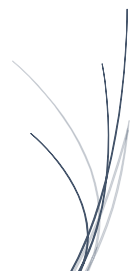
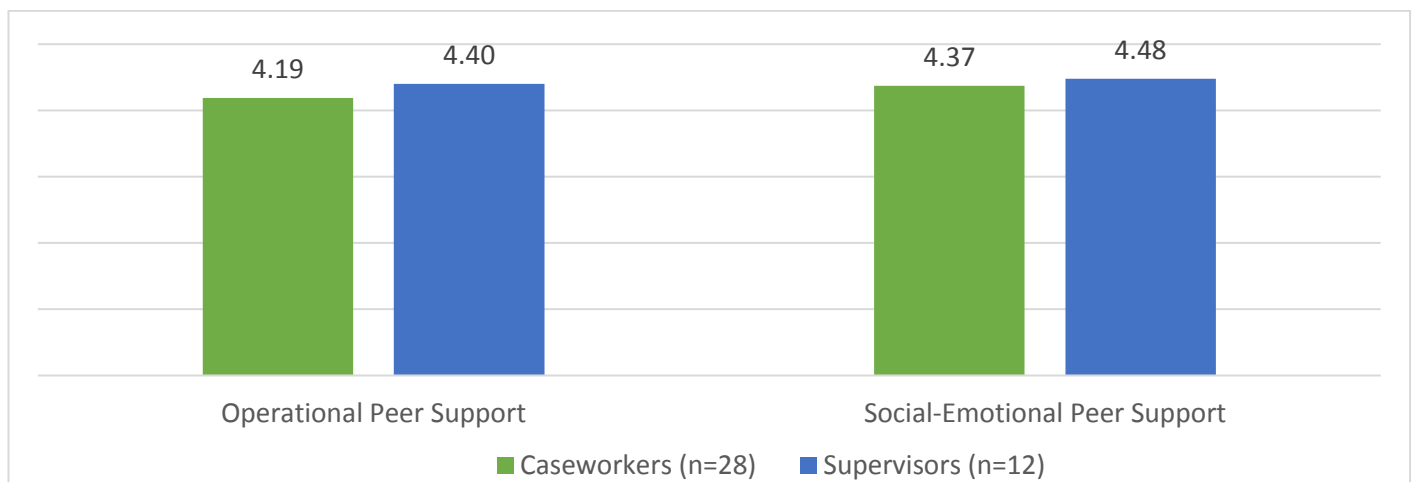
In the focus groups, graduates spoke about the meaningful relationships they have with coworkers. In their feedback, it became clear that graduates looked to their peers as an important source for emotional support to balance the difficulties of the job, for resource support to learn the job, and for



sensitive support to be able to listen with confidentiality, compassion, and shared humor. Several participants had been in their counties for a very long time and, as one stated, *“I’m coming up on 12 years in the same county. I can say the only thing that has kept me sometimes has been the relationships I’ve made. . . . I’m not ready to leave these people. And, certainly, that wouldn’t prevent me if there was an amazing job. But I feel very fortunate that I’ve built some amazing relationships with a lot of amazing women. And I want to stay because I want to continue to learn from them.”* Another graduate spoke about the importance of peer support, particularly when learning the job: *“We worked well together and we supported each other a lot. And I think that’s why it really helped that first year even more so than my supervision. And I had a great supervisor. But even more so than that I think it was my team members.”* For others, they may not have as strong a sense of commitment to their peers, but still found them as a source of support, *“And I keep a pretty good boundary where I don’t want to be friends with my coworkers, at least my teammates. But I still get along with all of them really, really well. And I still feel supported. And I feel like I can vent or talk about what is needed, too.”*

In the survey, graduates reported a high sense of *Operational Peer Support* and even higher sense of *Social-Emotional Peer Support* (see Figure 8). There were no significant differences by child welfare experience or by job position on graduates’ sense of both social-emotional and operational supports. While not a significant difference, on average, supervisors reported a higher level of support from peers than did caseworkers.

FIGURE 8: OPERATIONAL AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL PEER SUPPORT MEANS BY JOB POSITION



Organizational Commitment

In the survey, graduates reported fairly high *Intent to Stay in Their Current Agency* ($M(45) = 3.16, SD = 0.72$) and *Intent to Stay in Child Welfare* ($M(46) = 3.26, SD = 0.58$). In a research sample of 2,910 child welfare staff collected by Butler Institute for Families from 2014 to 2015, the average *Intent to Stay in the Current Agency* was 3.21 ($SD = 0.73$) and the average *Intent to Stay in Child Welfare* was 3.20 ($SD = 0.63$).⁷ The difference in means between the Colorado stipend graduate sample and the research sample were not significantly different.

As seen in Table 4, the *Intent to Stay* variables have relationships with the other variables that were measured in the survey, particularly those related to work climate and culture, burnout, and secondary trauma. Guidelines on correlations indicate that the magnitude of the correlation relationships (the values in Table 4) are such that .1 is a small/weaker relationship, .3 is a medium relationship, and .5 is a large/strong relationship. At this time, the sample is too small to test robust regression models that predict intent to stay, but the relationships between the variables stated above would be interesting to explore in a future study.

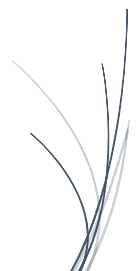
TABLE 4: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN INTENT TO STAY VARIABLES AND OTHER VARIABLES ($N = 32-46$)*

Variables	Intent to Stay in Current Agency	Intent to Stay in Child Welfare
Social Work Education	.36	.30
Job Satisfaction	.39	.32
Role Clarity	ns	.36
Role Conflict	ns	-.33
Job Is Important	ns	.33
Job Autonomy	.35	ns
Organizational Innovation	.32	.30
Organizational Justice	.44	.43
Organizational Support	.39	.41
Time Pressure	.42	ns
Work-Related Burnout	-.52	-.42
Operational Peer Support	.49	ns

*All correlations significant at $p < .05$ level; ns = not significant; bolded values indicate stronger relationships; minus sign (-) indicates an oppositional relationship

In the focus groups, graduates shared that many of them have changed positions since they first started working in child welfare, describing lateral moves and promotions within their current agencies, to other county agencies, and to external organizations. An interesting theme emerged from graduates' feedback, that **position moves (to different areas of child welfare work) helped mediate burnout and kept them in child welfare**. One

⁷ The psychometrics information for the *Intent to Stay in Their Current Agency* and *Intent to Stay in Child Welfare* scales for this research sample of child welfare staff is not publicly available (i.e., not available online), but can be shared by contacting the Butler Institute for Families.



graduate said, *“I probably wouldn’t have stayed in child welfare if I didn’t have that break,”* and another made a lateral move to a smaller county but *“it was actually, financially, it was a decrease in pay, but I was able to spend more time outside of work with less hours.”* A few others switched to non-case-carrying positions that, again, helped keep them in child welfare. However, two graduates had differing experiences about switching to non-case-carrying positions. For one graduate, making the switch helped bring them back to public child welfare in a different area of work after they had left the field entirely due to burnout. For another graduate, the switch to a non-case carrying position helped decrease burnout, but the graduate later returned to a case-carrying position because

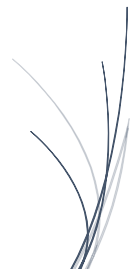
“I missed a lot about intake about the adrenaline and the action. And one-on-one work with families. . . . And I missed a lot of that more kind of clinical work.”

When talking about promotions, another theme that emerged was that **graduates used county changes as promotional opportunities, but were set back in accrued leave time as well as retirement.** Several graduates agreed that *“the only way you’re going to go to bump in pay is if you go from county to county. If you stay, you stay stagnant.”* Another graduate mentioned that it was not until they had



moved to a higher position in another county did their original county realize their skills and capabilities. Other graduates appreciated hearing about their peers’ experiences in advancing their careers by moving to other counties because their own county was saturated with too many applying for the same promotions or because positions were cut. However, those who did switch counties were quick to point out the greatest disadvantage was the loss of their accrued sick and leave time, as well as losing their vested time into retirement. For one graduate, *“I lost all of my banked time. And they changed our retirement plan dramatically during the 18 months that I was gone. So I was like four years behind now than I would’ve been fully vested.”*

Graduates also shared their strong commitment to stay in Colorado child welfare and what it takes to do the job. Several graduates spoke of the importance of grit: *“I think you have to have grit to be in this job. I would say child welfare isn’t rocket science. It’s harder.”* When speaking of commitment, another group described three qualities to have: flexibility, sense of humor, and ability to recognize when you need help—particularly the latter so that *“you can tell when you are just reaching your limit and shouldn’t be doing this anymore today or whatever that looks like. And it’s okay to ask for help or let people know I’m leaving for the day and it’s going to be okay and*

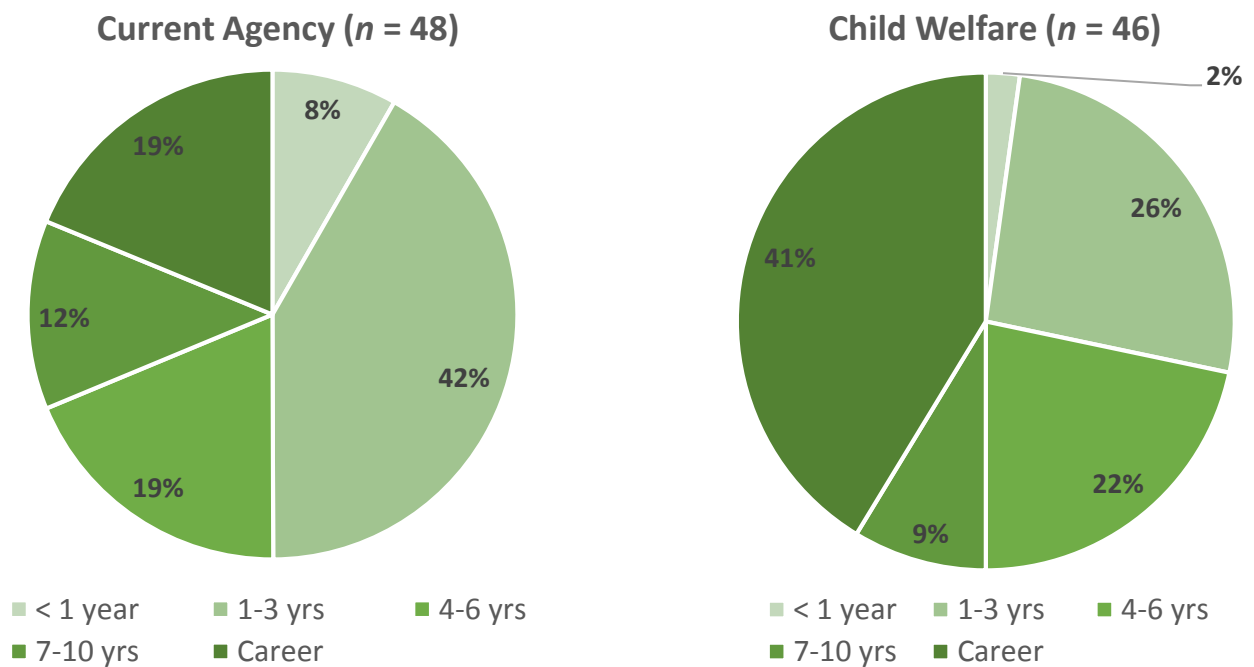


I'll be back tomorrow.” Several focus group participants also reinforced their “commitment to this population” to the point where “I have some kids on my caseload that I’ve had for several years. And I think that’s what also keeps me, like they’ve gone through how many caseworkers. I don’t necessarily have something better or different to do. So why would I leave them and give them another one.”

In the survey, half of graduates reported that they expected to stay at their current agency for another four years or through the rest of their career, although in a follow-up question, 64% reported they had considered looking for a job in the past year (see Figure 9). Meanwhile, 72% of graduates reported they were committed to the child welfare field for another four years and longer (see Figure 9). These results indicate a stronger commitment to the child welfare field, but less so for their agency. When asked to rank the primary reasons they stay in their job, graduates ranked the response options into the following order for the top five:

1. It allows me to make a difference in the lives of children and families = 36%
2. The work is fulfilling = 19%
3. The schedule works well for me = 11%
4. Financial constraints = 11%
5. Co-worker relationships = 6%

FIGURE 9: ANTICIPATED YEARS TO STAY IN CURRENT AGENCY AND CHILD WELFARE





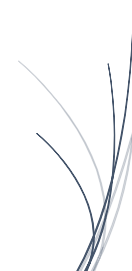
Summary

This has been an exploratory study of graduates from the Colorado Title IV-E stipend program since 2006. This evaluation has shown that stipend graduates have contributed several years of experience and best practices to serve children and families in Colorado. On average, most of the graduates contributed beyond their obligated one to two years of payback for receiving the stipend. In total, these 97 graduates, representing the past 10 years of stipend recipients, contributed an average of four years each to child welfare in Colorado since they graduated.

While students greatly appreciated the financial support from the stipends, they had higher praise for the collaboration between Colorado universities and county agencies. These collaboration efforts provided quality education and supportive learning environments that prepared those new to child welfare or improved practice for those already employed. Even those already working in child welfare but without a social work background felt that being part of the program enabled them to have a greater understanding of child welfare practice. Those new to child welfare agreed that being part of the stipend program helped give them an edge in the hiring process after graduation, in that being a stipend recipient showed county agencies that they were committed to child welfare work in Colorado. For those already working in child welfare, being part of the stipend program helped them re-commit to child welfare and extended their tenure at their agencies.

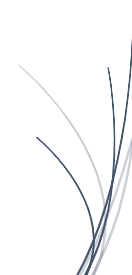
Burnout and work environments that are unsupportive and bureaucratic remained key reasons for graduates to leave child welfare and were the biggest challenges to those who were still working child welfare. Of the 97 graduates that participated in the study, 49% have left public child welfare, though most of them have remained in social work and a few are in child welfare–related positions (83% of those who left graduated from their programs more than three years ago). For those who were currently working in child welfare, 52% reported a score higher than 50 points (out of 100) on the *Work-Related Burnout* scale, though only 18% reported a score higher than 50 points (out of 100) on the *Client-Related Burnout* scale. To mediate the burnout effects, graduates discussed how position changes (both lateral and advancements), and also often changing counties, helped them stay in child welfare. For some, switching to non-case-carrying positions was also necessary, though at least one had switched back because they missed direct practice with children and families. However, changing counties came at a cost for these workers because they were giving up the sick, leave, and retirement time they had earned when they changed counties in order to continue their commitment to child welfare.

Despite these challenges, 72% of graduates working in child welfare anticipated staying in child welfare for the long term. They spoke of the grit necessary to do the work and the commitment to

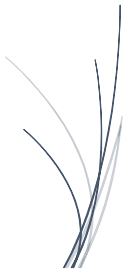


serving children and families as necessary ingredients for remaining in child welfare. The Colorado Title IV-E stipend has been a key influence for these committed child welfare professionals. In the following table, recommendations are provided to continue the strong work that the Colorado Child Welfare Stipend Committee has contributed to providing an experienced and educated workforce for the Colorado child welfare workforce.

Recommendations for Stipend Programs and Stipend Committee:
<p>Create stronger connections between universities and agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce theories, knowledge, and evidence-based practices with actual practice in the internships—closer work between faculty and field instructors on how to reinforce theory/background/historical perspectives into practice. • Ensure strong supervision and supports in stipend students’ internships. • Consider recognition plan at the universities for stipend students and graduates (annual lunches, awards, recognition at graduation). • Strengthen collaborations with counties, community agencies, tribal partners, and the state on new and emerging practices that will be connected to social work curricula and field experiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure stipend programs are connected in statewide efforts around the planning and implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act in Colorado.
<p>Create a subcommittee to explore funding strategies to maximize coverage of tuition costs (70% to 80%) and decrease student debt.</p>
<p>Promote the child welfare stipend as a career track and the career advancement opportunities in public child welfare at a statewide and county-based level.</p>
<p>Promote the value of BSW and MSW education to county and/or tribal agencies and the need to incentivize these opportunities pre- and post-educational opportunities.</p>
<p>Build a professional network for stipends recipients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent peer-to-peer learning and support opportunities for students and graduates across programs and across county and tribal agencies to meet and learn from each other (e.g., facilitate ongoing learning communities, facilitate LCSW supervision groups).
<p>Connect counties with resources and tools to address and prevent secondary traumatic stress and burnout, such as available trainings from the Colorado Child Welfare Training System (CWTS), the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) resources, the Capacity Building Center for States resources, and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network resources.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Recommendations for Future Study of Stipend Graduates:
<p>With the addition of two social work programs to the statewide Stipend Committee, CDHS should continue to provide resources to future program evaluation efforts that include all program students and graduates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include evaluation participation requirements in student stipend contracts going forward.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include study of field instructors with a goal of understanding how to better support and incentivize their training and preparation of stipend students.
<p>Develop a statewide database system for tracking stipend students and graduates in their placements, after graduation, and in their ongoing employment post-payback. Information collected should include demographic/background information and personal and work contact information for future outreach.</p>
<p>Continue evaluation of stipend graduates (survey and focus groups) and include graduates from all universities involved in stipend program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the study to include all new employees and new stipend graduates at agencies to follow demographics, career trajectory, and other workforce factors.
<p>Conduct a case study at an urban agency—conduct focus group with all stipend recipients at a county office for focused study of how stipend graduates could be better supported to stay long term in the agency.</p>
<p>Better collaboration between stipend programs and evaluators for better outreach to graduates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage graduates to use their personal networks to forward the survey.



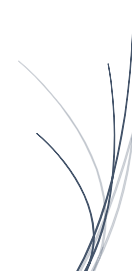
Appendix A: 2018 Graduate Survey Item-Level Means

Colorado Graduate Study Survey	Averages unless otherwise specified			
	All	All	Metro	DU
(% endorsed)	%	n	(n=19)	(n=32)
When you began planning your career, was child welfare your first choice?	54%	52	63%	47%
Is this your first full-time child welfare job?	52%	52	63%	44%
If you could turn back the clock and revisit your decision to take your current job, would you make the same decision?	90%	52	89%	91%
Do you have any parental responsibilities?	58%	52	58%	59%
Do you have any elder care or other special or other special family responsibilities?	13%	52	26%	6%
Professional Development and Preparation for Work	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=28)		(n=16)	(n=12)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	
1. My agency hires people whose educational background prepared them well for their job.	3.71	0.76	3.75	3.67
2. During my interview, I was given enough information to make an informed decision about the reality of this job.	3.79	0.74	3.63	4.00
3. The training I received by the agency when I was hired prepared me well for this job.	3.29	1.01	3.44	3.08
4. Available training opportunities are highly relevant to my job.	3.93	0.98	3.75	4.17
5. Training is highly valued by my agency.	3.75	0.97	3.50	4.08
6. Supervisors encourage staff to be involved in social work education or other professional development activities.	3.43	0.96	3.25	3.67
7. Available child welfare trainings have improved my ability to do my job.	3.75	0.75	3.75	3.75
8. In general, the child welfare trainings reflect the culture and values of my agency.	3.68	0.67	3.50	3.92
9. Supervisors support those attending child welfare training.	4.04	0.58	4.00	4.08
10. The child welfare training offerings meet the needs of my agency.	3.61	0.88	3.38	3.92
11. There are enough professional development opportunities for experienced staff and supervisors.	3.04	1.07	2.94	3.17
12. Child welfare skills-based training teaches me how to work with families of diverse cultures/ethnicities.	3.68	0.77	3.75	3.58
13. I use the skills that I learn in training on the job.	3.89	0.57	3.88	3.92
14. My supervisor encourages me to use the skills that I learn in training on the job.	3.86	0.89	3.63	4.17
15. New staff receive mentoring from more experienced staff.	3.46	1.07	3.50	3.42
16. Opportunities for coaching are available to staff.	3.43	1.26	3.50	3.33
Perceptions of Social Work Education	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=52)		(n=20)	(n=32)
Please indicate how frequently staff in your agency engage in the following activities:				
1. My Social Work COURSE WORK was relevant to my current work.	4.13	0.69	3.90	4.28
2. My Social Work FIELDWORK was relevant to my work.	4.33	0.76	4.00	4.53
3. My Social Work program stimulated my desire for continued professional development.	4.21	0.72	4.15	4.25
4. I would recommend my Social Work program to colleagues.	4.29	0.70	4.45	4.19
5. My position after I completed my degree lived up to my expectations.	3.73	0.91	3.70	3.75
6. My current position allows me to use my Social Work knowledge and skills.	4.33	0.65	4.15	4.44

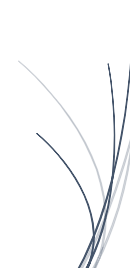
7. My Social Work education was useful training/preparation for the challenges my position poses.	3.98	0.87	3.70	4.16
8. My Social Work program adequately prepared me for my current position.	3.90	0.87	3.70	4.03
Public Perceptions of Child Welfare	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=52)		(n=20)	(n=32)
The purpose of the following measure is to gain your perception of the general public's view of child welfare workers. Below is a list of statements about how various individuals and groups perceive child welfare. For each statement, please the extent to which you agree.				
1. Most people respect you for your choice to work in child welfare.	3.42	0.98	3.60	3.31
2. People feel that child welfare work is important.	3.79	0.85	3.90	3.72
3. People make me feel proud about the work I do.	3.65	1.03	3.65	3.66
4. People just don't understand what you have to go through to work in child welfare.	4.33	0.71	4.35	4.31
5. When people find out I am (or preparing to be) a child welfare worker, they seem to look down on me.	2.62	0.82	2.55	2.66
6. The government should take more responsibility for improving child welfare services.	3.62	0.84	3.75	3.53
7. The work I do is valued by others.	4.42	0.80	4.60	4.31
8. Government officials only pay attention to our work when there is a serious incident.	4.13	0.89	3.95	4.25
9. Most people blame the child welfare worker when something goes wrong with a case.	4.35	0.59	4.25	4.41
10. Most people think that child welfare workers do too little to help the children and the families who are their clients.	3.96	0.86	3.95	3.97
11. Most people wonder how I can do this kind of work.	4.44	0.67	4.30	4.53
12. I feel uncomfortable admitting to others that I am a child welfare worker.	2.60	1.26	2.35	2.75
13. People look down on my work because of the types of clients I serve and the needs they have.	2.40	1.14	2.35	2.44
14. Most of my friends and family act like they don't want to know anything about my work.	2.50	1.04	2.85	2.28
Job Satisfaction	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=51)		(n=19)	(n=32)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:				
1. My job fits my career goals.	3.80	0.87	3.42	4.03
2. In my work, I have a feeling of success and accomplishment.	3.98	0.74	3.89	4.03
3. My work has the right level of challenge.	3.94	0.79	3.79	4.03
4. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	3.90	0.88	3.84	3.94
5. I feel appreciated for the work that I do.	3.51	0.99	3.37	3.59
6. I like the people that I work with.	4.35	0.63	4.32	4.38
Self-Efficacy	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=51)		(n=19)	(n=32)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:				
1. I have the skills that I need to do my job effectively.	4.29	0.61	4.26	4.31
2. I consistently plan ahead and then carry out my plans.	4.08	0.69	3.84	4.22
3. I usually accomplish whatever I set my mind to.	4.22	0.67	4.16	4.25
4. I am effective and confident in doing my job.	4.29	0.58	4.32	4.28
5. I have been effective in my work here.	4.25	0.52	4.26	4.25
Time Pressure	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=51)		(n=19)	(n=32)



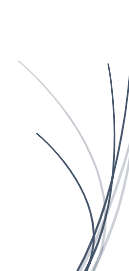
Please indicate how frequently the following statements are true for you:				
1. I have too much work to do in the amount of time that I have.	3.73	1.04	3.79	3.69
2. I don't have enough time to do my job effectively.	3.25	1.20	3.32	3.22
3. I am too busy at work.	3.49	1.12	3.47	3.50
4. My workload is too high.	3.33	1.23	3.32	3.34
5. I have a lot of time pressure in my work.	3.75	1.09	3.68	3.78
Organizational Climate and Culture	All (n=50)	All	Metro (n=19)	DU (n=31)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the with following statements.				
1. It is often not clear who has the authority to make decisions regarding my job.	2.72	1.18	2.74	2.71
2. The goals and objectives of my staff team are clearly defined.	3.68	0.84	3.74	3.65
3. My job responsibilities are clearly defined.	3.74	0.90	3.74	3.74
4. I know what is expected of me in my agency.	3.82	0.75	3.79	3.84
5. Too many rules and regulations interfere with how well I am able to do my job.	3.46	1.03	3.74	3.29
6. I have to do things for my job that are against my better judgment.	2.68	0.98	2.63	2.71
7. There are too many people telling me what to do.	2.60	1.01	2.58	2.61
8. I am held responsible for things over which I have no control.	3.36	1.08	3.58	3.23
9. A lot of people outside my agency are affected by how I do my job.	3.86	0.88	3.89	3.84
10. I feel my job is important to the functioning of my staff team.	4.10	0.54	3.95	4.19
11. I feel that my work makes a meaningful contribution.	4.18	0.44	4.21	4.16
12. I feel that my work is highly important.	4.22	0.62	4.21	4.23
13. I have a great deal of freedom to decide how to do my job.	3.36	0.99	3.16	3.48
14. Control is assigned so that I have authority to make decisions within my own work area.	3.54	0.76	3.32	3.68
15. It is up to me to decide how my job should best be done.	3.32	0.87	3.16	3.42
16. I have the freedom to complete task assignments without being over-supervised.	4.00	0.78	3.74	4.16
17. My job requires a wide range of skills.	4.30	0.58	4.26	4.32
18. My job requires a lot of skill and effort to do it well.	4.34	0.48	4.32	4.35
19. My job challenges my abilities.	4.22	0.58	4.16	4.26
20. I am able to make full use of my knowledge and skills in my job.	3.86	0.81	3.68	3.97
21. I am encouraged to develop my ideas.	3.76	0.80	3.58	3.87
22. I am encouraged to try new ways of doing my job.	3.64	0.75	3.53	3.71
23. My agency encourages me to improve on my boss's methods.	2.92	0.97	2.68	3.06
24. My agency encourages me to find new ways around old problems.	3.44	0.95	3.37	3.48
25. Decisions about my job are made in a fair manner.	3.28	0.99	3.11	3.39
26. Before decisions about my job are made, all of my concerns are heard.	3.02	1.06	2.89	3.10
27. Accurate and complete information is collected before decisions are made about my job.	3.14	1.11	2.79	3.35
28. I can obtain additional information when decisions about my job are unclear.	3.52	0.89	3.42	3.58
29. My agency shows very little concern for me.	2.48	1.13	2.74	2.32
30. My agency really cares about my well-being.	3.54	1.07	3.11	3.81
31. My agency cares about my general satisfaction at work.	3.32	1.12	2.95	3.55
32. My agency cares about my opinions.	3.32	1.10	3.16	3.42
Intent to Stay in Current Agency Scale	All (n=48)	All	Metro (n=19)	DU (n=29)



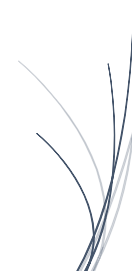
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your agency:				
1. I would have a hard time finding another child welfare job at a different agency.	2.13	1.02	2.42	1.93
2. I plan to leave this county DHS as soon as possible.	2.90	1.19	2.84	2.93
3. I have too much time invested in this county DHS to leave.	3.15	1.07	3.16	3.14
4. I expect to still be working at this agency in 5 years.	3.27	1.20	3.16	3.34
5. I am committed to staying at this county DHS.	3.58	1.05	3.58	3.59
6. I would gain little from switching to another county DHS office.	1.65	0.76	1.84	1.52
Intent to Stay in Child Welfare Scale	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=50)		(n=19)	(n=31)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about child welfare:				
1. I plan to leave child welfare as soon as possible.	2.00	0.95	2.21	1.87
2. I would have a hard time finding a job outside child welfare.	2.28	1.03	2.63	2.06
3. I have too much time invested in child welfare to leave.	2.94	1.27	2.89	2.97
4. I expect to still be working in child welfare in 5 years.	3.52	1.05	3.53	3.52
5. I am committed to continuing to work in child welfare.	3.76	0.98	3.68	3.81
6. For me to leave child welfare would mean giving up a substantial investment in training.	3.36	1.03	3.42	3.32
7. My professional goals include working with children and families, but not necessarily in child welfare.	3.42	1.14	3.16	3.58
Coping Strategies	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=35)		(n=16)	(n=19)
Please indicate how frequently the following statements are true for you:				
1. I understand my exposure to the effects of vicarious trauma.	4.17	0.86	4.00	4.32
2. I practice physical self-care (e.g., sleep, rest, exercise, nutrition, etc.).	3.97	1.01	4.00	3.95
3. I rely on a diverse network outside of work for social support.	3.86	1.12	3.94	3.79
4. I use support available through my child welfare agency (e.g., supervision, colleagues, debriefing, education, and training).	3.51	1.12	3.25	3.74
5. I have a work-to-home transition plan that I participate in as part of my self-care.	3.00	1.41	2.88	3.11
6. I have a clear self-care plan.	3.31	1.30	3.19	3.42
7. I have made my supervisor aware of my self-care plan.	2.63	1.35	2.25	2.95
8. I feel supported by my supervisor in my self-care plan.	3.34	1.28	3.13	3.53
9. I work on staying present with friends or family as part of my self-care.	3.74	0.98	3.50	3.95
10. I try to take regular breaks during the work day as part of my self-care.	3.20	1.39	3.13	3.26
11. I use humor as a coping tool.	4.31	0.87	4.19	4.42
12. I debrief with colleagues as part of my self-care.	3.97	1.20	3.44	4.42
13. I pay attention to the physical responses I experience when I am exposed to trauma situations.	3.66	1.14	3.44	3.84
14. I participate in activities or hobbies that restore my energy.	4.06	1.00	3.75	4.32
15. I practice religious or spiritual renewal as part of my self-care.	2.80	1.71	2.50	3.05
Copenhagen Burnout Inventory	All	All	Metro	DU
Please indicate how frequently the following was true for you:				
1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Occasionally, 4= Often, 5= Very Often				



Work-Related Burnout scale	(n=35)		(n=16)	(n=19)
1. Is your work emotionally exhausting?	4.17	0.82	4.06	4.26
2. Do you feel burnt out because of your work?	3.26	0.85	3.31	3.21
3. Does your work frustrate you?	3.51	0.92	3.25	3.74
4. Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?	3.77	0.88	3.88	3.68
5. Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?	3.17	1.20	3.25	3.11
6. Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?	2.54	1.12	2.69	2.42
7. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?	3.63	0.77	3.50	3.74
Client-Related Burnout scale	(n=35)		(n=16)	(n=19)
1. Do you find it hard to work with clients?	2.60	0.74	2.38	2.79
2. Do you find it frustrating to work with clients?	2.69	0.68	2.56	2.79
3. Does it drain your energy to work with clients?	2.89	0.80	2.94	2.84
4. Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with clients?	3.23	0.91	3.25	3.21
5. Are you tired of working with clients?	2.37	0.84	2.12	2.58
6. Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with clients?	2.54	0.82	2.31	2.74
Secondary Traumatic Stress	All	All	Metro	DU
	(n=34)		(n=15)	(n=19)
The following is a list of statements made by persons who have been impacted by their work with traumatized clients. Please indicate how frequently the following statements were true for you in the past seven (7) days: 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Occasionally, 4= Often, 5= Very Often				
1. I felt emotionally numb.	2.09	0.97	2.00	2.16
2. My heart started pounding when I thought about my work with clients.	2.18	0.94	2.20	2.16
3. It seemed as if I was reliving the trauma(s) experienced by my client(s).	1.59	0.61	1.40	1.74
4. I had trouble sleeping.	2.41	1.26	2.27	2.53
5. I felt discouraged about the future.	2.21	1.04	2.20	2.21
6. Reminders of my work with clients upset me.	2.06	1.04	1.93	2.16
7. I had little interest in being around others.	2.03	1.00	2.00	2.05
8. I felt jumpy.	1.74	0.90	1.60	1.84
9. I was less active than usual.	2.00	0.85	2.00	2.00
10. I thought about my work with clients when I didn't intend to.	3.06	1.15	2.93	3.16
11. I had trouble concentrating.	2.44	1.05	2.53	2.37
12. I avoided people, places, or things that reminded me of my work with clients.	2.06	0.98	1.80	2.26
13. I had disturbing dreams about my work with clients.	1.82	0.87	1.67	1.95
14. I wanted to avoid working with some clients.	2.53	0.96	2.60	2.47
15. I was easily annoyed.	2.41	0.99	2.33	2.47
16. I expected something bad to happen.	2.38	1.07	2.27	2.47
17. I noticed gaps in my memory about client sessions.	1.68	0.77	1.53	1.79
Exposure to Violence	All	All	Metro	DU
	%	n	(n=15)	(n=19)
Please consider the following examples of workplace violence and indicate if you had this experience in the past 6 months. (% endorsed)				
Yelled at, shouted at, or sworn at by a client or other household member	68%	34	80%	58%
Threatened by a client without physical contact	35%	34	40%	32%



Threatened with a weapon	0%	34	0%	0%
Had personal property or workplace property damaged	0%	34	0%	0%
Assaulted by a client or other household member with no injury or minor injury	0%	34	0%	0%
Assaulted by a client or other household member that required an emergency room or physician visit	0%	34	0%	0%
Social-Emotional Peer Support	All	All	Metro	DU
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:	(n=46)		(n=19)	(n=27)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:				
1. I feel more positive after talking to my coworkers about challenges with my job.	4.26	0.65	4.11	4.37
2. My coworkers are a source of encouragement in doing this job.	4.46	0.55	4.26	4.59
3. My coworkers listen to me when I need to talk.	4.50	0.51	4.42	4.56
4. My coworkers provide understanding in difficult moments that occur on the job.	4.48	0.55	4.32	4.59
5. My coworkers make me feel valued.	4.35	0.60	4.21	4.44
Operational Peer Support	(n=47)		(n=19)	(n=28)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:				
In my agency . . .				
1. Coworkers share information with each other to improve the effectiveness of client services.	4.32	0.59	4.21	4.21
2. Coworkers provide guidance on other tasks when needed (for example, completing paperwork, accessing resources, or demonstrating how to do something).	4.32	0.59	4.16	4.16
3. Coworkers are willing to ask for help from colleagues.	4.36	0.67	4.05	4.05
4. Coworkers count on each other to help resolve difficult work problems.	4.36	0.74	4.11	4.11
5. Staff work together to get things done (for example, covering caseloads or meetings, completing paperwork).	4.15	0.86	3.95	3.95



Appendix B: 2018 Graduate Survey Scale-Level Means

SCALE MEAN SCORES	ALL (N = 28–52)		METRO (N = 15–20)		DU (N = 12–32)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
(INCLUDES ALL SCALES WITH AT LEAST 75% COMPLETION RATE)						
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & PREPARATION FOR WORK	3.67	0.54	3.58	0.48	3.80	0.61
PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION	4.11	0.49	3.97	0.54	4.20	0.44
PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE	2.88	0.40	2.94	0.39	2.85	0.41
JOB SATISFACTION	3.92	0.61	3.77	0.70	4.00	0.54
SELF-EFFICACY	4.23	0.46	4.17	0.40	4.26	0.50
TIME PRESSURE	3.51	0.99	3.52	1.08	3.51	0.95
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND CULTURE	3.56	0.49	3.43	0.46	3.63	0.51
ROLE CLARITY	3.62	0.71	3.63	0.62	3.61	0.77
ROLE CONFLICT	3.04	0.81	3.13	0.55	2.98	0.93
JOB IS IMPORTANT	4.09	0.42	4.07	0.40	4.11	0.44
JOB AUTONOMY	3.54	0.72	3.34	0.68	3.66	0.73
JOB IS CHALLENGING	4.20	0.50	4.11	0.44	4.25	0.53
ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION	3.43	0.64	3.29	0.48	3.52	0.71
ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE	3.23	0.91	3.05	0.86	3.33	0.93
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	3.41	0.99	3.12	1.00	3.58	0.95
INTENT TO STAY IN CURRENT AGENCY	3.10	0.74	3.03	0.80	3.14	0.71
INTENT TO STAY IN CHILD WELFARE	3.21	0.65	3.26	0.76	3.18	0.59
COPING STRATEGIES	3.57	0.68	3.37	0.68	3.74	0.65
WORK-RELATED BURNOUT	56.43	18.95	56.92	22.45	56.02	16.06
CLIENT-RELATED BURNOUT	42.98	16.03	39.84	13.61	45.61	17.76
SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS	36.68	11.12	35.27	12.62	37.79	9.99
EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE	1.12	0.84	1.20	0.77	1.05	0.91
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL PEER SUPPORT	4.42	0.52	4.26	0.52	4.53	0.49
OPERATIONAL PEER SUPPORT	4.30	0.59	4.09	0.69	4.44	0.46



Appendix C: Focus Group Questions

BACKGROUND INFO:

- Did you receive IV-E stipends for BSW? MSW? Both? (could just ask for raised hands)
 - How long ago did you graduate?
- How long have you worked in the field of child welfare? In a Colorado county child welfare agency specifically?
- What is your current job position, department?

CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY:

- Thinking back, how did being a stipend recipient influence your feelings and perception of entering the county child welfare workforce with your degree?
 - How did you feel about being selected for a stipend?
 - How do you think being a stipend recipient affected your identity as a child welfare professional? Or not?
- How did doing your field placement at a county agency prepare you for the job?
 - Did you feel that it set you apart from other new workers? If yes, how so?
 - If you were already working in child welfare, do you feel that getting another degree and getting the stipend makes/made a difference in your practice?

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

- Have you had promotions or job position changes since you graduated?
 - Have you transferred job between counties (or wanted to)? Why or why not?
- What encouraged you to stay working in a county child welfare agency (or in the field of child welfare) even after you completed the obligation? [*To encourage discussion, provide examples below*]
 - Specific workplace supports such as supervision or culture of the agency
 - Workforce incentives such as salary, benefits, promotional opportunities, pay increases
 - Commitment to working with children and families
 - Stability of the job
- If you were working while in school, how did the county support you during your education? (*Not counting internships*)
- How are you supported now as a child welfare stipend graduate?
 - Do you see any differences in opportunity for you as opposed to your peers who did not get a stipend? If so, can you explain?
 - What kind of professional development opportunities do you have now? Do you wish you had?
- What changes could your county make to help support stipend recipients?
 - Before going to school?
 - During school?
 - Beyond graduation?



IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program

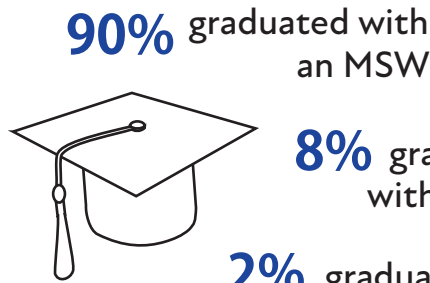
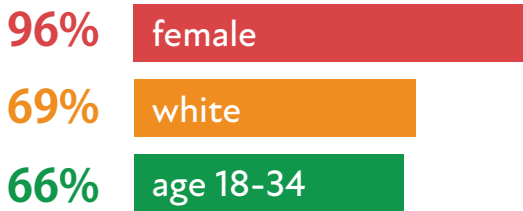
2018 Study

A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Colorado's 2006-2016 Stipend Program Graduates



Of respondents, (N=97, 48% response rate):

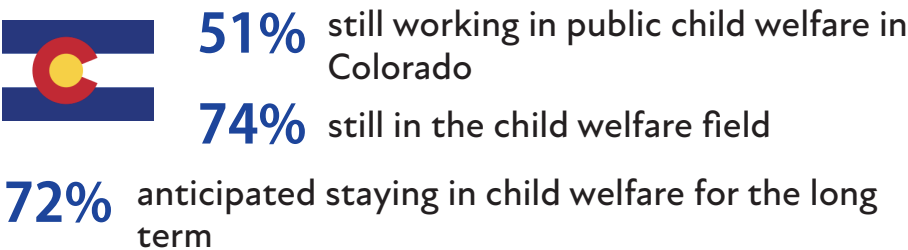
DEMOGRAPHICS



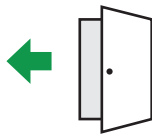
Employment payback period was as expected for **94%**



CAREERS IN CHILD WELFARE



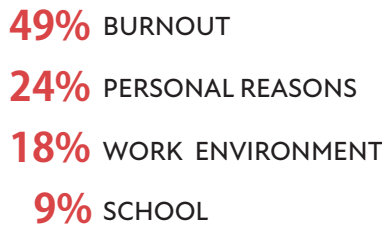
Why they stayed:



Why they left:

"It allows me to make a difference in the lives of children and families"

"The work is fulfilling"



- Study participants

IMPACT OF THE STIPEND PROGRAM

- ✓ Kept stipend students in the field beyond their obligated employment "payback" time
- ✓ Created an edge for hiring graduates
- ✓ Increased collaboration between university programs and county agencies

IMPLICATIONS

FOR THE FIELD

A well-educated workforce leads to **better outcomes for children, youth, and families** involved in the child welfare system.

The Stipend Program creates **peer connections** that extend beyond the classroom and into professional careers, which helps ease burnout.

University-agency collaborations lead to better trained graduates and a **stronger workforce**.

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE:



<http://tinyurl.com/CW2018Report>

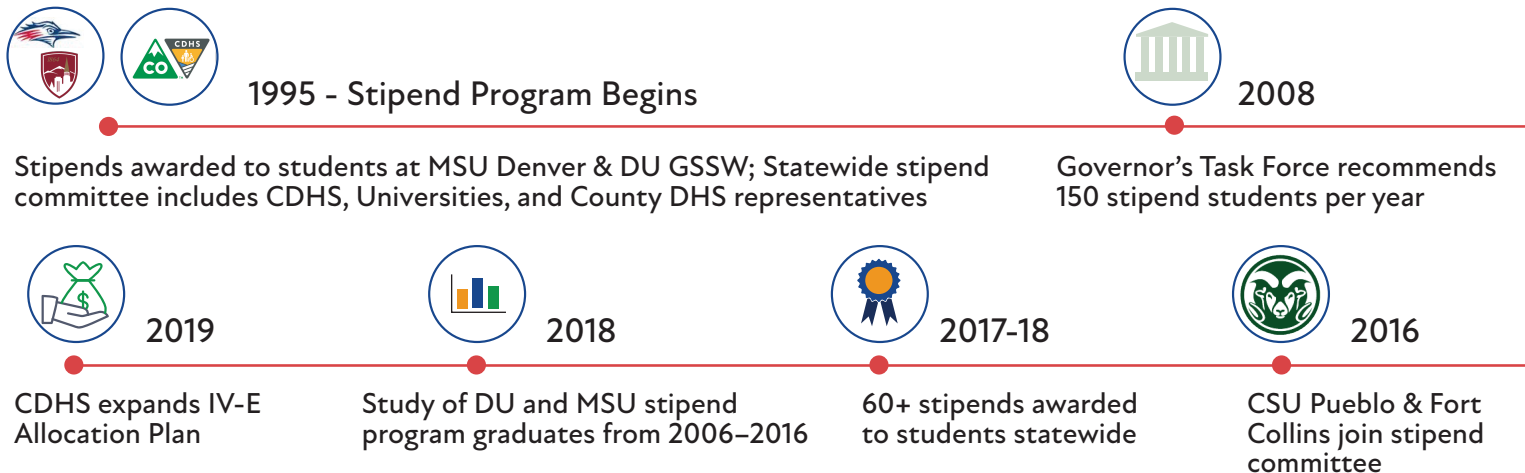


IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program

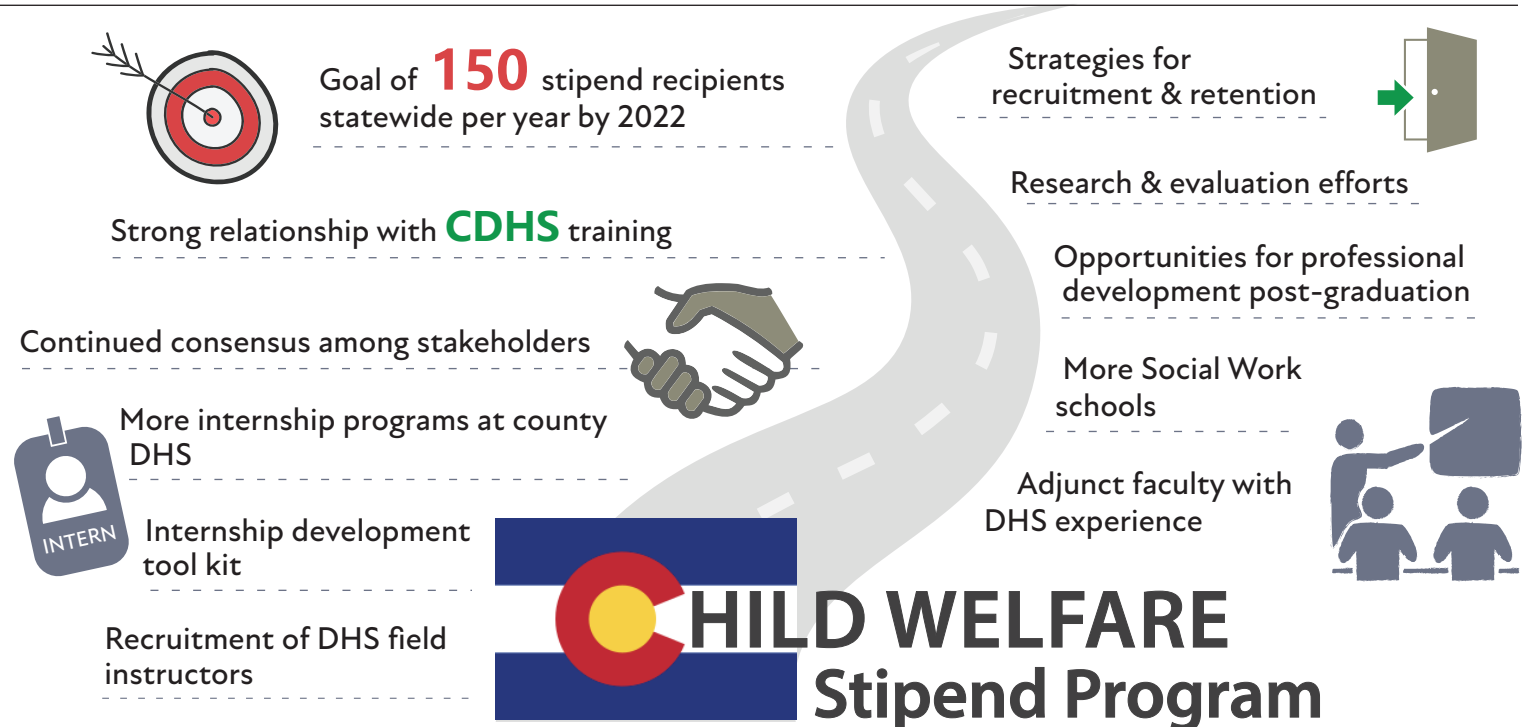
Developing the Workforce in Colorado

Growth in the child welfare stipend program creates a well-prepared and educated child welfare staff.

Program History



Where We're Going!



CHILD WELFARE Stipend Program