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THE WISCONSIN CHILD WELFARE TRAINING SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System is comprised of 71 county agencies, 11 tribes, four UW System Universities and the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) within the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the DCFS State Adoption Program, and the service provider agencies of the DCFS Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW). The counties, state programs, tribes and universities are organized into five Training Partnerships: Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Partnership for Children and Families at UW - Green Bay, Social Work Program, the Intertribal Child Welfare (ICW) Training Partnership also located at UW-Green Bay, Southern Child Welfare Training Partnership, at UW-Madison, School of Human Ecology; Western Wisconsin Partnership, at UW-River Falls, Social Work Department; and The Milwaukee Partnership for Professional Development, at UW-Milwaukee Helen Bader School of Social Welfare. Each Partnership, in collaboration with the counties, state programs and tribes located in their respective regions and DCFS as the state child welfare agency, develop and implement training programs that are responsive to local training needs as well as to state and federal policy changes.

The training system is overseen by the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council, which coordinates and integrates the training provided by the Regional and Tribal Partnerships with each other and DCFS. The broad purpose of the training system - to improve the child welfare services available to the children and families of Wisconsin through a clearly conceptualized, well developed training system for all Wisconsin child welfare workers - is clear. The functioning of the training system, with its demands for a high level of teamwork and collaboration between and among all of the partners involved, must be well understood by all of the partners. The purpose of this document is to detail the agreements that all of the partners have established thus far.

Included are the following:

1. Historical background of the development of the training system
2. Rationale for a coordinated training system
3. The mission of the training system
4. Assumptions and operating principles
5. Roles and responsibilities of all partners
 - A. The universities
 - B. The counties and tribes
 - C. The DCFS
 - D. The organization and structure of the Regional and Tribal Partnerships
 - E. The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council

6. Structure and organization of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council
 - A. Council Composition
 - B. Selection of Council Members
 - C. Council organization
 - D. Training Council staffing
7. Amendment of this document

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System has its origins in Fall 1991 when the Social Work Program at UW-Green Bay was awarded an Interdisciplinary Training Grant by the US Children's Bureau to develop curriculum in child welfare for the BSW Program and training programs for employed, child welfare professionals. Four counties and three tribes in close proximity to UW-Green Bay sponsored the Children's Bureau project and thus were the first partners in the development of a University-based child welfare training program. In 1993, DCFS issued a Title IV-E training contract to UW-Green Bay and the training project was extended to include 23 counties and 6 tribes in northeast Wisconsin. In 1997, three additional counties were added to what is now known as Northeast Wisconsin Partnership for Children and Families (NEW Partnership).

Participating counties and tribes saw themselves as active partners in the project and were excited that the University had committed itself to work closely with county and tribal representatives to assure training that was relevant and accessible to child welfare workers. A Steering Committee, composed of tribal and county administrators, began to meet regularly with University faculty to formally advise on the development of policy and procedures. A Training Advisory Committee, comprised mainly of child welfare supervisors, was developed to review curriculum, location, scheduling, and other training issues.

Funds to support the NEW Partnership were very limited; the University contribution and the Title IV-E dollars accessed through DCFS were not adequate to meet the full scope of training needs. In Spring of 1997, all NEW Partnership county and tribal partners voted to contribute funds to support the training program. The voluntary contribution of these resources signified the constituents' strong commitment to NEW Partnership and its training program and enabled the University to access more IV-E funds through DCFS.

The NEW Training Partnership model caught the attention of other counties and stimulated interest in developing similar partnerships in the rest of the state. In response to their interest and the desire of DCFS to improve training for child welfare workers throughout the state, a consultant was employed by DCFS beginning in summer 1997 to develop similar Partnerships at UW System Universities that would encompass the remaining counties and tribes in the state. The Western Partnership, sponsored by the Social Work Program, UW River Falls, began operation in 1998. The Southern Partnership, sponsored by the School of Human Ecology, UW Madison, began operation in 1999. The Milwaukee Partnership, sponsored by the School of Social Welfare, UW Milwaukee, began operation in 2001. The ICW Partnership, sponsored by all 11 Wisconsin tribes with administrative support by UW-Green Bay was formed in 2004 and

will begin operation in 2005. The ICW Partnership will address specific training needs for Indian Child Welfare staff and coordinate with the Regional Partnerships on the delivery of statewide training to tribal staff and addressing Indian Child Welfare issues.

In Fall 1998, it became clear that while the Partnerships could and would develop and implement training programs responsive to local constituent interests and needs, a central structure to assure that a single, coordinated training system was in place was essential. It was recognized that autonomous regional training partnerships, without a structure to develop and coordinate common training goals and activities and share resources, would quickly become problematic. A central structure was needed that would encourage and maintain local autonomy while providing a way to coordinate and develop training policies in response to issues common to the Regional Partnerships. A central structure was also needed to coordinate modifications to the Core training curriculum for child welfare workers.

In December 1998, the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council began operation under the auspices of the DCFS. The initial document outlining the concept of a Wisconsin Training System was developed in Fall 1998 and review of this document was the first agenda item of the new Training Council. A modified version of the original document was accepted as a working document in March 1999 after review by the Regional Partnerships. At meetings in March and May of 2000, representatives from the member agencies of the Regional Partnerships met together to discuss the structure, mission, policies, and procedures of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System. This document represents the collective effort of those who attended the Spring 2000 meetings to modify and further develop the original 1998 document to include a statement of current mission, goals and operating procedures for the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System.

RATIONALE FOR A COORDINATED TRAINING SYSTEM

The major reasons for a statewide coordinated training system are as follows:

1. A coordinated system provides for the development and maintenance of a consistent Core of child welfare competencies across all county and tribal child welfare agencies in the state. There are great benefits for counties, tribes, and consumers of services when the child welfare workforce is consistently prepared to practice within a common knowledge and practice base, philosophy, and standards.
2. Training needs can be met most effectively and efficiently through the sharing of resources between and among all Regional and Tribal Partnerships. Resources that can be shared include: Core and advanced trainers, curriculum development specialists, selected training workshops where, for a variety of reasons, one region's workshop may also serve another region's workers, pooling of staff resources to address particular issues or problems encountered by all partnerships, and the development and implementation of evaluation tools. In addition, each University where a Partnership is located represents an array of resources, which often can be used to benefit all child welfare professionals in the state.

3. There are, in addition to local training needs, federal and state priorities and mandates that have training implications and which must be implemented. A single coordinated training system provides a structure whereby training needed by all child welfare professionals can be centralized and offered jointly by the Partnerships. Such training, when offered by the Partnerships, can be readily integrated with all other Partnership training. A coordinated training system also provides a structure, which allows opportunity for DCFS to gain greater understanding of regional training needs and priorities and promote high quality child welfare services statewide.

4. Accountability must be built into any system. DCFS carries a major statutory responsibility for the quality of services for the protection, safety, and permanence of Wisconsin's children. This responsibility and accountability are shared with the counties and tribes. The Universities also share a responsibility when accepting a DCFS-issued IV-E training contract. A well-structured, coordinated training system plays a significant role in achieving the high quality services for which all partners share accountability.

MISSION OF THE WISCONSIN CHILD WELFARE TRAINING SYSTEM

The mission of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System is to develop and deliver high quality, competency-based training to managers, staff, and care giving families in order to provide family-centered, child focused, strength based, culturally responsive, competent child welfare services throughout Wisconsin. This is accomplished through a formal partnership and collaboration between county and tribal child welfare agencies, DCFS, and the university system. Training initiatives and activities will be integrated with other educational and organizational change strategies to promote and achieve excellence in the child welfare system. (Stevens Point Workshop Participants, May 11, 2000).

ASSUMPTIONS AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System is based upon three key assumptions:

1. Federal IV-E training funds can be accessed only by the state child welfare agency. Implicit in this is the federal assumption that the state agency is the entity primarily responsible for the training of child welfare workers.
2. Federal IV-E training funds are awarded only to public universities through a contract issued by the state child welfare agency. The federal structure assumes that Universities have particular expertise in curriculum development, education, research, and a service commitment to the citizens of their regions. These factors make them excellent sponsors for child welfare training projects.
3. Universities must work in partnership with the counties, state programs and tribes whose workers are to be trained to carry out the public and tribal child welfare functions. Working with the employing agencies allows the University-sponsored training programs

to satisfy the consumers of the training programs. All partnership members carry different roles and responsibilities in child welfare service delivery, and all must enter into a collaborative partnership if training is to be developed and delivered that is relevant to the demands of a constantly changing practice.

Principles to guide the operation of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System include:

1. Each Training Partnership, with its Steering Committee and Training Advisory Committee, will serve as the conduit for DCFS and regionally developed training within their respective regions of the state. The Training Partnerships will have the opportunity to review all proposed training and advise on matters of content and delivery of the proposed training.
2. Policies that impact only the regional constituency are the responsibility of the Training Partnerships. Policies that impact all Partnerships and DCFS will be developed by the central coordinating body, the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council, following input and review by the Training Partnerships.
3. Common standards for training, including use of a common child welfare worker Core competency-based curriculum, as well as common qualifications for the recruitment, selection, and assignment of Core trainers, will be utilized by all Partnerships.
4. In addition to Core training (above), specialized and related training will be developed at the discretion of each Partnership according to regional interest and need. Collaboration and agreement that some training should be centralized will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with recommendations made by the Training Council.
5. The Partnerships will utilize a common individualized training needs assessment (ITNA) to identify worker Core training needs. Related and specialized training needs that build upon and are integrated with the Core worker competencies will also use a common ITNA, but may be implemented differently by each Partnership.
6. Each Partnership will collect information regarding training activities and participant evaluation of training sessions in a consistent manner. Each Partnership will provide summary information on training activities and evaluate the effectiveness of training. Summary reports will be provided to all partners in the training system.
7. Local Steering Committees will have the opportunity to review all proposed actions and policies of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council prior to action by the Council.
8. Collaboration, teamwork, and consensus will guide decision making throughout the Training System.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARTNERS

Each of the participating partners carries a distinctive set of responsibilities for the successful operation of the training system as a whole. These responsibilities are delineated as follows:

The Universities

The universities are responsible for the implementation of Training Partnerships. The specific responsibilities of each university are to:

1. Negotiate and receive a contract from DCFS for IV-E training funds and the management of the Partnership.
2. Comply with the terms of the contract and submit reports as requested by DCFS.
3. Negotiate and receive contributions from the local member agencies of the Training Partnership and keep member agencies informed regarding the use of member funds.
4. Develop a budget, manage it and provide fiscal accountability for Title IV-E, local agency contributions and all other funds.
5. Employ all Partnership staff and manage contracted training providers.
6. Develop and implement all training programs:
 - a. Deliver, in collaboration with the other Partnerships, the Core curriculum for workers in its region.
 - b. Develop and implement specialized, related and ad hoc training that is responsive to regional interests and needs.
 - c. Develop and implement training projects for DCFS.
7. Evaluate its training programs and participate in evaluation activities sponsored by the Training Council.
8. Develop and maintain structures through which all partners provide input into Partnership policy, procedures, and training programs.
9. Provide representation to the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council.
10. Maintain collaborative relationships with other Partnerships and DCFS.
11. Provide progress and evaluative report to constituents and to DCFS.
12. Adhere to policies and implementation procedures developed and approved by the Training Council.

County/tribal/state partners

Each Training Partnership develops its own structure and procedures. The specific responsibilities shared by all Partnerships are to:

1. Contribute financial support for its own Partnership according to a formula developed by the region or tribes.
2. Contribute to the development of Partnership plans, policies and priorities.
3. Provide data as needed on county and/or tribal training needs.
4. Serve on the Partnership Steering Committee and Training Advisory Committee, and other committees and groups deemed necessary by the Training Partnership.
5. Provide ongoing guidance and advice to assure feedback on relevance and applicability of training programs.

6. Fulfill educational roles that support the transfer of what is learned in training to job performance in order to maximize the benefits of training.
7. Provide representation and contribute to the work of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council.

Wisconsin Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Division of Children and Family Services carries responsibility for the training contracts and, at the same time, is a partner in the training system through the Adoption Program and Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. The specific responsibilities are to:

1. Develop, issue and monitor IV-E and other training contracts.
2. Serve as a resource to the Partnerships in the development and maintenance of consistent IV-E allowable record keeping, eligibility rates, and other matters related to the fiscal oversight of IV-E funds.
3. Assist Partnerships to secure resources adequate to carry out a high quality training program.
4. Coordinate and provide support staff for the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council.
5. Provide representation to the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council.
6. Provide ongoing information about statewide child welfare priorities, federal and state policy changes, and training needs.
7. Participate in curriculum development and review to assure integration of relevant policy into training programs.
8. Promote changes in Wisconsin child welfare policy so there is consistency with the standards of best practice presented in training programs.
9. Provide representation to the 5 Training Partnership Steering Committees.

Organization and structure of regional partnerships

Each of the Partnerships has developed a structure that supports teamwork and collaboration between University and county/state/tribal partners in the development of policies and procedures that guide its work. These include procedures for selection of county/tribal representation on the Steering Committee and Training Advisory Committees of the Partnership, county/tribal fiscal reimbursement procedures and others (Copies of the Training Partnerships' organization and structure are attached).

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council is the body responsible for coordinating the work of all parts of the training system into an integrated whole. The specific responsibilities of the Council are to:

1. Develop policy and procedures that insure the integrity of a common Core curriculum for child welfare workers across the state is enhanced and maintained. These policies and procedures include: adoption of the common worker Core, regular curriculum review and revision, and establishing qualifications, recruitment methods, selection, reimbursement, and assignment of trainers in worker Core.

2. Provide a forum for all partners to share progress, issues, resource needs, and engage in collaborative problem solving around the many areas of common concern.
3. Provide direction and receive input from subcommittees and workgroups regarding curriculum development, training evaluation and other training issues.
4. Consider information about DCFS training plans and priorities, as well as its overall assessment of child welfare practice across the state and their implications for training.
5. Facilitate collaboration in (a) identifying the practice and training implications of state and federal child welfare plans and priorities; and (b) developing strategies for introducing training content which supports implementation of the above implications.

Structure and Organization of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council

The Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council is responsible for the overall coordination, development and monitoring of policies and procedures for the entire training system.

Council Composition

The Training Council will be comprised of the following individuals:

Training Partnership Directors	4
Partnership Training Managers (including ICW)	5
County Partnership Representatives (2 each)	6
BMCW Partnership Representatives	2
Tribal Partnership Representatives	4
DCFS State Agency Representatives	<u>4</u>
TOTAL	25

Selection of Council Members

Partnership staff and DCFS representatives serve on the Council by virtue of their positions. Designated DCFS representatives include the DCFS Administrator, Director of the Bureau of Programs and Policies, and the Director of the Office of Policy Evaluation and Planning and the State Child Welfare Training Coordinator. The county, BMCW and tribal representatives will be designated by their peers who serve on Regional Partnership Steering Committees. These representatives, who occupy administrative positions in their agencies, will serve for two-year terms with staggered terms for county, BMCW and tribal representatives.

Council Organization

The Training Council will meet on a regularly scheduled basis. The Council Chair (and co-chair if desired), who must be one of the county, BMCW or tribal representatives to the Training Council, will be elected by the Council members for a two-year term. The Chair's responsibilities will include chairing all Training Council meetings, providing direction to

Training Council subcommittees, and representing the Training Council. It is essential that the chair is able to facilitate collaboration and consensual decision making.

Summaries of all Training Council meetings will be distributed to Partnership committees and groups by Partnership staff. Training Council policy recommendations will be reviewed by the Training Partnerships before the Council takes final action.

Training Council Staff Support

DCFS will provide staff support for the Training Council, including a DCFS staff person to serve as secretary to the Training Council. DCFS will consult with the Training Council in appointing a secretary and other staff support. The secretary and staff will work very closely with the Chair in the preparation of agendas and materials for Training Council consideration. In addition, DCFS staff members may be called upon to support committees of the Training Council. Other staff support for the effective functioning of the Training Council will be provided by DCFS as needed. DCFS staff will attend and participate in Training Council meetings on a regular basis.

AMENDMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Changes and amendments to the policies and procedures outlined in this document will be on recommendation of the Training Council and by action of the Regional and Tribal Steering Committees and DCFS. Training Partnerships and DCFS can propose changes to the Training Council. Partnership and DCFS representatives will act on the recommended changes at formal meetings to be held at least annually. In addition to action on recommended changes, this meeting will address such areas as total system progress, setting future goals, and generally assess total training system functioning. Strategies to take corrective action, when indicated, will also be considered at the annual meeting.

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