

2012-10-09 Formal Education or School of Life: What are the Best Credentials for the Child Welfare Workforce?

Presenters: Cassandra Gregory; Ken Nakamura; Joan Levy Zlotnik

Operator: [00:00:05] Welcome, and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode until the question and answer session. At that time to ask your question please press Star then 1 on your phone. I would now like to turn the conference over to your host. We have Ms. Elizabeth Mertinko; ma'am, you may begin.

Elizabeth Mertinko, Facilitator: [00:00:21] Thank you very much, Laurie. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the 6th of 12 monthly webinars celebrating the Children's Bureau's centennial year. Today's webinar -- Formal Education or School of Life: What are the Best Credentials for the Child Welfare Workforce? -- is the 4th of 8 topical webinars that will be offered between now and April, 2013.

Today's discussion examines some of the different educational paths that lead workers to the child welfare field, and how varying educational levels and disciplines impact the relationship between child welfare workers and the communities in which they serve.

Before we begin, just a few housekeeping items. First, please note that we have muted all the telephone lines to minimize background noise. We will open the lines and the conclusion of the presentation to allow questions and comments from our audience. Also, your feedback on these webinars is very important to us. We will be asking for your comments at the conclusion of the today's' presentation and ask that you take a few minutes to share them with us. Finally, the slides and the recording of today's presentation will be available at the Children's Bureau Centennial Website at <http://cb100.acf.hhs.gov>. We will share this website with you again at the conclusion of today's webinar.

Now I would like to introduce our speakers for today. Our first speaker is Cassandra Gregory. Ms. Gregory is the Social Work Supervisor for the Imperial County Department of Social Services in California. Our second speaker is Ken Nakamura. Mr. Nakamura is the Project Coordinator for the Title IV-E Program at San Diego State University in California. Our final speaker today will be Joan Levy Zlotnik. Ms. Levy Zlotnik is the Director of the Social Work Policy Institute at the NASW Foundation. Welcome to all three of our speakers, and at this point I'd like to turn things over to Ms. Gregory to start our discussion.

Cassandra Gregory: [00:02:03] Good morning. My name is Cassandra Gregory. I am a Social Worker Supervisor with the Department of Social Services here in Imperial County. I am also the Independent Living Program Coordinator for the County of Imperial, and my current focus is the Independent Living Program services for dependent and delinquent youth and out-of-home placement, as well as transitioning services for youth aging out of foster care; and more recently the extended foster care program, along with wrap-around services for families going through family reunification.

I have also provided years of supervision for our adoptions program as well as family reunification and family maintenance services experience, and listed a background about where I come from.

I am currently in my first year as a Field Instructor for Title IV-E students in the MSW Program with San Diego State University. These interns are also employees of our agency. Prior to this experience, I have supervised Bachelors and Master's level interns with the University of Phoenix, Northern Arizona University, and our Imperial Valley College.

I have been an Employee with the Department of Social Services for 25 years, the latter 15 in Child Welfare Services. My experience started as an eligibility worker for about a year and a half, then I was promoted to a social worker in the GAIN Program, now known as CalWORKs.

When I started my career with the Department of Social Services, I was hired two months after graduating from Imperial Valley College with an Associate's Degree in Behavioral Science. My experience was limited to my life experience and work opportunities provided through our community college work experience program.

Before I talk more about what motivated me for furthering my education, I'd like to take a moment to give you an idea of my community. Imperial County is a desert community that expounds 4,597 square miles. We border, as you can see, Mexico to the South of us, San Diego County to the West, Riverside to the North, and the state of Arizona to the East of us. Just to put it into perspective, we are approximately 200 miles away from Disneyland or Hollywood, and for the most part, the only stars that we see are the ones that light up our desert sky at night.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, our population ranked over 174,500. We are a predominately Hispanic community, and we regularly rank one of the highest in our unemployment rate within our state. We are one of the most productive farming regions within the state of California, with an estimated annual production of over one billion dollars. Although seasonal, agriculture is the largest industry in our county, and it accounts for over 48 percent of all employment.

We do have two state prisons and one military base here in Imperial County, and the per capita income for the county was \$13,239. Approximately 19.4 percent of families and 22 percent of the population were living below poverty level. This includes 28.7 percent of those under the age of 18, and 13.6 percent of those aged 65 or older.

I want to give you a makeup of our employees within Children and Family Services. Our director, Jim Semmes, oversees the Department of Social Services. Our Deputy Director, Mickey Castro, is in charge of Children and Family Services. Overall, we have 86 employees, 43 of which are line staff social workers. We also have 8 social worker supervisors, 2 of those are Master's Level social supervisors.

We currently have 12 Master's Level workers, and by the end of 2014 we hope that number will go up to 18 with the addition of 6 MSW Title IV-E graduates from the current cohort. We also have approximately 28 workers with a minimum of a Bachelors of Art or Science degree. As you can see, we also have one Master's in Public Administration.

Prior to deciding to go back to school to obtain my Master's Degree, I was able to draw from my undergraduate work, as well as the comprehensive Core Training for Social Workers and Social Worker Supervisors provided by the Public Child Welfare Training Academy. Each of these core trainings were provided to me at the point of my promotion, first into my social worker role, and

then subsequently into my social worker supervisor role. This was combined with my hands-on and/or life experiences that I have received throughout the years, or have obtained throughout the years.

Although I participated in annual trainings and workshops provided by the Public Child Welfare Training Academy, UC Davis and other resources, I constantly felt as if I needed to learn more to assist me in making a difference for our clients.

So why did I get my Master's in Social Work? I continued to be challenged with the same question from myself and from my coworkers, some of whom had been for as long if not longer than myself. Some of these questions were: what could we do differently to assist families that we work with; and are we really doing the best we can to help our families with their children.

As my role changed within our agency, my need to grow professionally also grew more intensely. I felt that in order to be an effective social worker and supervisor, I had to have more of a foundation to draw from. Up to that point the 20-plus years of training and experience I had were essential in providing me nuggets of crucial resources to pull from, but to me, it felt like small nuggets. I felt I needed to learn more in order to assist my coworkers, my clients, and my community in making a difference.

As each course of my graduate program provided me effective methods in social work, the most fundamental components that repeatedly made sense to me were some of the ones that were listed here on the slide: the importance of collaboration with our community partners, drawing from our community resources, and being able to effectively articulate the needs of our clients or our community on their behalf; teaching our clients to effectively communicate their needs, and researching the best approach to providing these services.

Best practice and research or evidence-based practice began to take on more meaning to me. The power of utilizing teamwork or a client or family-centered approach in driving individuals and groups toward change that they wanted and resolving their issues also began to take on more meaning.

In 2011 as a result of my MSW program, I was part of a group of five Title IV-E interns that implemented family group conferencing within our agency. This was a new approach to engaging families using a new approach for our agency, a new approach for our community. As a team we went out and we researched various models; we conducted family focus groups within our community; participated in some community mapping of needs and resources; we went to each community and talked to individuals within that community to clearly understand what their needs and resources were, and we further explained the approach that we were taking to providing services to individuals within their community.

We also conducted a survey of our coworkers and found that 92 percent of the social workers were willing to learn a different approach or technique in working with families, and 73 percent of these social workers were frustrated with the cookie-cutter approach to providing services. Also, 96 percent believed that lack of family support leads to lack of success for families in child welfare.

So the more that I learned, I began to correlate the methods to madness of the work we were doing on a daily basis, and the services and the approaches that we could take, or that we were taking on behalf of our clients.

So how am I making it different now. As a result of the experiences and education that I now pull from, I can confidently state that my work has changed in a way that is more valuable to meeting the needs of our youth and our families. My perspective has broadened to include my client's community as a resource to meeting their needs.

In my work with the Independent Living Program, an extended foster care program, I have developed written procedures that utilize the fundamentals of family group conferencing. Our work with this population is youth driven, giving importance to collaboration, and identifying natural support systems. I am not only able to teach our social workers and interns to engage families, but we are also teaching youth these principles and values.

My partnerships within a multidisciplinary team have taken on more meaning as a result of what I am able to bring to the table to assist the team in decision making for our community and for our clients. Being able to integrate social work values with the daily work we provide our community members and their families, ultimately being able to effectively connect youth and their families back to their community and assisting them in identifying or developing their natural support system so that we may be able to gradually exit from their lives as their primary support and assist them in transitioning into their independence, or not being dependent on a system.

Though we ask: what is the best criteria for child welfare services, I look back at how I did business before and how I do business now, and I can't help but reflect on when I first came in, a social worker in child welfare -- although the training was very good for me in providing me an overview, as I stated before, it was bits and pieces of very crucial information, but that was it. It was just bits and pieces.

I feel now that with this foundation that I have received through my Master's Degree, I almost feel like I went through a boot camp sort of process, in having me reevaluate or assess my values and those of my community, and integrating what is best practice and what is backed up by research and what has been done before effectively.

One of my internship opportunities, aside from the family group conferencing, was to go back and work with families in emergency response. That's where I started my experience here in child welfare was as an Emergency Response Social Worker.

So going back, I think it was 11 years later, and being assigned to do emergency response, I remember going into homes and really looking at pulling from that client or that family's resources, sitting down with them and having them look at not just their genogram and the makeup of their family, but also what resources do they have available to them. What can they tell me? They are their own expert. What strengths do they bring to the table, and how can I help draw those strengths and help them identify those strengths for themselves? Those are just bits of pieces of what I saw and what I can reflect as doing differently now that I have my Master's, or as I was working on getting my Master's Degree.

So at this point what I'd like to do is go ahead and hand it over to Ken Nakamura, and if you have any questions we'll definitely be glad to answer them at the end of our presentation.

Ken Nakamura: [00:17:20] Hi, this is Ken Nakamura, I'm the Title IV-E Project Coordinator at San Diego State University's School of Social Work, and it's both a pleasure and an honor to have the opportunity to do this webinar.

I'd like to share just a little perspective. I know Joan, at the end of our panel, will be talking more about some of the national studies regarding the workforce. But I wanted to share a little bit about what San Diego State Title IV-E programs look like, and then share a little bit about some of the work that we're currently doing here, that we think prepares the workforce.

The San Diego State University School of Social Work Title IV-E Program is part of the California Social Work Education Center Title IV-E programs. Now there are currently 21 schools in the state of California at the Master's level providing Title IV-E programs, and San Diego State is one of the original 10. So we have now almost 20 years of history here at San Diego State, and over that time period we've graduated, we currently have a total of 491 students who have entered the Master's Program as Title IV-E students, and 64 of them are currently in school.

Of the remaining 427 who had the opportunity to potentially graduate, we have 381 who completed the Master's Program, almost a 90 percent graduation rate. And then of the 381 graduates, 46 of them are still in the process of completing their 2-year payback that's required of them in child welfare, so we currently have 300 who have fully completed their payback out of a possible 335. Again, close to a 90 percent completion rate official in their payback requirements of being part of the Title IV-E program.

What I wanted to point out, is of the 300 who graduated and completed their payback, when this program first started in California, graduating students had to complete a year of work in child welfare for every year that they received some support. So we had a number of students complete a 3-year Master's Program as well as a 4-year Master's Program. So all of the figures are -- when we say post-payback, many of them of course completed 2-year fulltime programs, but we also had people who had to complete 3 years of payback or 4 years of payback.

And one of the things I wanted to just give you a sense of is that 37 have completed or are still working in San Diego County Child Welfare Services. They've completed at least 10 years, and some of the original graduates of the Title IV-E Program are still working at San Diego County Child Welfare Services. And these are years post-payback, again, so in addition to their 2, or 3, or 4 years that they completed as part of their obligation.

What I also wanted to say is of all the students who went to work at San Diego Child Welfare Services, we still have currently 149 with a new group of employees being hired this month, as well.

This [slide] is a little bit different and I'll come back to it. I notice there's a little error in the figures. But what I wanted to point out, is in the first 10 years of the Title IV-E program, because it was a new effort and because there was a great desire on the county's part to see their employees go back to school and get their Master's Degrees, we had 120 out of 129 students

graduate that were county employees when they entered the program. County employees in child welfare.

And of the 120 who graduated, 118 of them stayed to at least complete their payback... that's a 98 percent rate; what I wanted to highlight for a moment, though, is in the last 10 years we've seen a drop-off in the total number of employee students and their actual completion in both graduation as well as payback. Part of the challenges being that they no longer receive from the county a leave of absence, which allowed them to go back to school full time, concentrate on their education, and then return to work with their jobs protected.

Given the circumstances these days, in the past 10 years, when employees want to take a leave to return to school full time, they're taking the risk that they have no right to return. So many of them do a 4-year program, which challenges both their balancing of employment, family, and work, as well as the more years you're in the program the more life events are a potential to occur while you're in the midst of them, so we haven't had as good of a completion rate.

And so I've decided to do some kinds of things differently, and later I'll be sharing some of those different ways that we're trying to stimulate a greater involvement of employee students.

So one thing we know is -- I love this quote, it's back from 45 years ago, but "No state and no community has developed a Child Protective Service program adequate in size to meet the service needs of all reported cases of child neglect, abuse and exploitation." And this is a quote from 1967, and I think for all of us in the field, we know 45 years later every state and every county is still struggling to provide the level of service needed.

A number of things that many studies and a lot of discussion is around tends to focus on the retention of workers in child welfare; performance outcomes in terms of families willing to stay in child welfare; reunification -- those kinds of things; often a look at the level of satisfaction of workers in the field of child welfare; and also how to mitigate the stress or the burnout or secondary trauma often experienced by workers doing a very difficult job, with often very high caseloads.

The other aspect that people often look at is the organizational culture. How are workers supported; what's the level of communication in partners within the agency; and what seems to be essential or necessary for organizations to have a better outcome in retaining workers?

More recently, there's been thankfully serious attention in looking at fairness and equity issues: disproportional and disparate treatments of families of color, and in essence, are there forms of structural racism that continue to perpetuate the disparate outcomes.

The other thing that we often look at is: what are the levels of experience, education, and training. So today's topic is particularly relevant for me, working in a program trying to help develop a workforce, and kind of looking at what are the things that we know that seems to help.

So I wanted to share a little bit about a perspective I have about someone like Cassandra, who worked for many years like many people throughout the United States, come into the field of child welfare without a specific education in social work but who had built up a number of years of experience working closely with families, being very successfully in their agencies, and doing good work for their communities.

So some of the benefits of developing that experience is that you have a workforce that's typically very knowledgeable about agency procedures, practices, the organizational expectations and structures; they've also accumulated a great deal of wisdom from years of experience working with families; and through all of the contact, conversations, and interactions, they've developed their own awareness of what seems to benefit families.

When you've stayed in an agency over time, you're likely to have built some shared support and learning that takes place among coworkers who continue together and develop ways to make the workforce and the workplace match well together; finding ways to be happier and satisfied in the work; and then the truth of child welfare work is that it's very demanding. And whether individual case situations in which families had serious incidences of abuse, or whether it's simply the workload, experienced workers have figured out a way to handle the demands and the stress of work.

Some limitations that come along with that, is that usually all of that experience has been learned in a specific agency culture over time, working in one setting. The knowledge gained is specific to that, and often doesn't have the experience of seeing what other agencies and other child welfare work might look like in a different state or a different county.

The wisdom that they've gained working with families has been acquired generally through the particular practices that they were trained and taught to do on the job and that they've evolved over time, but again, it's specific to what they learned when they came into that job.

And then by staying in one agency, for better or worse, is often a reinforcement of certain beliefs and attitudes about people, about the people you serve, about what the agency is capable of doing, and what kinds of practices seem possible.

The other side of it is the area that I work in, which is Social Work Education, and questioning in what ways does social work education offer the kinds of positive supports or interests for the workforce. At least in social work education there are some things that we can highlight pretty quickly, which is values, knowledge, and skills are formalized; there are certain professional values that are incorporated throughout, and ideally are matched to the knowledge and skills that we want people to learn; and then a program of social work encourages and provides specific internship opportunities to try to integrate that learning into particular practice skills.

I'm going to want to go through these a little bit faster, because I want to talk a little bit about some other things, but I just wanted to share a little -- those are sort of the core perspectives of what social work education offers.

What are the potential benefits from social work education? And here I wanted to diverge a little bit from simply talking about the preparation of the individual worker. Of course, social work education would like to believe that it at least offers a professional knowledge and skill base and a particular value-guided practice; and for the individual worker of course there's potential likelihood for advancement within their agency, and then ultimately in the career field of social work if they leave the agency.

One of the things we don't tend to focus on when we're talking about the workforce is what is the relationship between the university and the child welfare agency, and the university and the child

welfare agency in relation to the community? Which I think are all potential benefits from workers and agencies considering building partnerships with the university social work program. So for the agency, not only hopefully developing a more skilled professional staff, but it allows for the potential to consider different creative ways to work together given limited resources in our field, and given limited resources in various communities.

For families and communities, we hope the benefit of social work education is that practitioners will approach them with an investment in having them participate in decision making that affects their lives and the School of Social Work. Hopefully the school invests itself in building partnerships in the community to address issues of health and safety, and creating an environment that hopefully is more supportive of families being successful.

And this latter part, I want to expand on today; but also highlight not so much what is happening, but what are some new ways to think about working together.

So this opportunity to do the webinar -- it's kind of fun to think that a hundred years have passed for the Children's Bureau. And for those of us who look back in history, probably the last 50 years, since 1962, has the emphasis been on child welfare. And we've seen a growth of new programs, new services, and greater attention publicly on the issue of child welfare and child abuse; and we've seen some very positive changes in the system, and also safe and continuing and persistent challenges.

So I thought I would try to offer a different way of looking at things for discussion. And so I found this... I thought of an analogy that I would hope could offer something to everyone. So the question is: What does shipbuilding have to do with child welfare?

So if you go back and think about it, in the old days all ships were built using wood for a very simple reason, which is that people knew that wood floated. And even when iron was available, no one used it to build ships, because if you took a piece of iron and dropped it in water, it would sink. So how did we get from there, to the kinds of ocean liners and transport ships that we currently use that weigh so much.

And part of it is, people finally understood that "the law of floatation was not something that was discovered by contemplating the sinking of things, but actually by contemplating the floating of things. And by contemplating the floating of things which floated naturally and then intelligently asking why they did so."

In other words, how do we move from what we experience and tend to end up believing is true, to imagining something that we have yet to experience. And that connection made a significant difference in the way we do things. It requires the willingness to imagine, and then begin to work until we can understand the principles behind what makes that change actually possible.

I wanted to kind of reframe some issues that I think are involved in addressing the future of our workforce. Part of that is looking at purpose. We all know that child welfare is intended to address the issues of child abuse. To do all that we can to reduce the harm to children and to ensure their safety. But there's something really larger than that.

And then the other part about workers is, we're always looking to see how workers can be retained, and what kinds of skills and knowledge they need in order to be successful in their

work. But if we're not careful, we miss what actually generates their spirit, their motivation to be inspired in what they do.

And then looking at the notion of meaning, what creates individual and collective energy for change. What is it that makes us work together to do something that takes effort, and that hopefully will increase the welfare of others.

This is the way I look at child welfare services. What is the intent of the public commitment for child protection? It's to ensure that all children and their families have the opportunities to live healthy and hopeful of fulfilling their human potential.

So what inspires persistence and dedication in social workers? When they have the opportunity to utilize their knowledge and skills to be effective in supporting families, fulfilling their personal reasons for being in social work; feeling connected to the people they serve; encouraging a positive work environment; and feeling like they make a difference.

What creates individual and collective energy for change? When people working together experience a positive change. When they see that effort is consistent with the values of alleviating injustice -- most people are concerned about fairness; when they see that their work improves the welfare of people; belief in a larger purpose than themselves; and have experiences that build trust and a sense of success.

What is essential for wellbeing of children and families? I believe it requires individual and collective effort; requires conscious attention to the capacity of people to desire health and wellness; and then particularly an orientation toward community building that's place-based, that looks at specific neighborhoods and communities in which people have built a history and to focus there, not to over generalize, but to stay place-based. And then mutual efforts allow unique abilities and skills to be shared for a common purpose, to minimize power differences and increase possibilities. And then experiencing and inspiring education; doing meaningful work; opportunities to play; and to have the sense of present and future orientations in life.

So I'm invested in my work with preparing workers who are new social workers to focus most on fostering wellbeing. And I see wellbeing beyond the individual child's wellbeing; let's really think about how families that are health and wellness within the neighborhoods and communities they live in, which means part of our responsibilities to social workers and those of us who work in child welfare... let's play a role in improving the conditions of communities, helping to transform neighborhoods, and ensuring that the people who live there have the greatest voice in what matters to them, and the opportunities to make decisions about their lives.

I also believe in public service. Which is, we use public dollars not to simply have services for people, but we have a larger commitment to make the welfare of the whole, of our public good, benefit all of us who live in communities. And it requires agencies and universities to have an attitude, I believe, that in order to achieve excellence, it can only occur if the organization promotes a culture of creative dissatisfaction. In other words, people have to continually want to improve the conditions in which we live, and then allow people to be innovative in seeking how to do that.

I think one of the challenges in child welfare is over time we've developed services and attitudes within our workforce, within our agencies, that separate us from the communities and the families that we serve. So I love this quote from Rudyard Kipling: "All the people like us are We, and everyone else is They." And I think this is a problem that we want to address, and shape our programs so that we are all We.

So I just wanted to share -- and I'll go through this real quick -- I'm interested in establishing different kinds of partnerships so that I can create context in which either employees, students in particular, but also new students of social work who want to go into the field of child welfare actually engage in different kinds of efforts, work closer to families and neighborhoods in which difficulties persist; so I've been very conscious of creating internship opportunities little by little in particularly hardest hit neighborhoods and in areas in which we know we have data that indicates high reports of abuse, high domestic violence, a number of difficulties; but also if the faith and confidence in those neighborhoods are people who want their lives to get stronger and healthier.

So "It is not enough to understand, or to see clearly. The future will be shaped in the arena of human activity by those willing to commit their minds and their bodies to the task." A quote from Robert F. Kennedy.

I wanted to talk about three different examples to indicate what I mean. I'm not just speaking from just a conceptual desire, we've been beginning to implement some different approaches. So I wanted to talk a little bit about my Imperial County partnership. Cassandra was a part of this. I met with the director and deputy director; we talked a little bit about what the needs of the community were, the hopeful directions for child welfare services here, and some of the struggles they have given the limited resources.

So we looked at the fact that 5 of their employees were going through the Title IV-E program, and for their last year each of them would be doing 20 hours of internship. So if we actually could put them together as a team, we basically were putting 100 hours of staff time together; and as a team, I felt that they could engage their learning and their experiences of working in child welfare to create something new here.

They ended up working with the community to begin implementing a Family Group Conferencing model here... one of the more proactive and pro-friendly approaches to decision making, and began to do that. What's significant is that they've incorporated into their system improvement plan, and now with another cohort of MSW's, they're going to continue to work to refine the delivery of that service here in Imperial County.

And I wanted to just point out that the students did all of it from the beginning, got themselves immersed, did the training planning, and dealt with all the heartaches and headaches in trying to implement a new program and a new approach in a community... they did that as part of their educational experience and maximized their knowledge from their prior experience as well as the new learning that they got from social work.

I also wanted to point out we're doing this from the county of Imperial, which is one of the hardest hit. We have high unemployment rates, high child poverty rates, and a community of about 80 percent predominately Mexican/Mexican-American families, many of whom are

struggling with issues of poverty but have strong networks on themselves and were able to maximize that through a family group conferencing model.

I'm trying to be very thoughtful of the time, and I realize I'm taking a little bit longer than I intended. I just want to highlight two other efforts that we are doing as a different way to incorporate a number of these concepts of working in neighborhoods, wellbeing, and then working together.

San Diego County East Region had three county child welfare employee students in the Master's Program for their first year internship. They worked as a team to work with a 150 unit apartment complex, went door to door, began making connections with residents, talking with them and finding out what they would like to improve their conditions in their apartment complex; and then they worked together with a number of community partners and with families to provide help, educational experiences, activities for young people that were safe, and then brought in partners to address the wellbeing in the neighborhood.

One thing to know, this particular apartment complex by itself ranked I believe the 3rd highest location within the city of El Cajon for crime and violence, and that's why we located there.

This is just to add a little more information for those who will see the slides, but not beyond the webinar. So if I could move to the very last example.

In National City it's one of the poorer communities, has the high poverty rate; particularly on the west side, an older neighborhood had been impacted over the years by allowing industry to move into the neighborhood. So you had car painting businesses, a number of things that were creating environmental hazards for children, big trucks that rumbled down neighborhood streets that increased risks of accidents; and it's also a city with a very high rate of child abuse, domestic violence, some human trafficking concerns and some emerging gang violence as well.

We've located at an elementary school, we're providing direct services to families, to the school, but we've built a partnership with the Hunger Coalition, the Environmental Health Coalition, working with county public health with the city council and vice mayor in particular. There's a next door family resource center staff that we're working with, we've included some universities, and are beginning to work with business and financial institutions to try to create a context around this neighborhood in which they have greater access to support and services for their families.

One of the goals that we know particularly in foster care is that educational outcomes for children and youth are quite poor, but we have very conscious intentions to begin identifying how to start from kindergarten and get this community's children to college.

One of the things I'm trying to share with these examples, and I want to thank people for their patience, I think these are the ways that we adjust child welfare and child abuse issues, by promoting much more holistic views of working together and building some unique partnerships in different ways, and it's the responsibility of us in our field for the public good to make these efforts.

I also wanted to say that I think part of the CalSWEC Consortium has been a great resource for all of us in the state of California, having 21 schools all making an effort. We've been able to

support one another and add different ways of working. And then in San Diego, another wonderful partner I have is Casey Family Programs, who's been very helpful with not only their resources and their staff, but to continually support my new students by putting -- I have all of my new students go through the "knowing who you are" training, looking at issues with disparities, and the racial and ethnic identities as a protective factor.

I've kind of rambled on, I hope that's okay, and I'd love to turn it over to Joan.

Joan Zlotnik: [00:48:54] Thank you very much, Ken. This is Joan Zlotnik, Director of the Social Work Policy Institute at the NASW Foundation, and I am really pleased to be a part of this excellent Children's Bureau Centennial Webinar today. When Cassandra and Ken and I and Elizabeth spoke about how we would go about this, we thought it would be useful for Cassandra to start with her own personal experience and career path, to then move on to Ken to talk about how social work education can truly submit to child welfare work, and then I would try to provide some more global perspective on this question of formal education or school of life, what are the best credentials for the child welfare workforce.

So I always start out at this very place, if you want to move to the next slide, to say that this is not a question that could be answered so simply. And as I go through the presentation I will try to explain that.

So the conversation or the debate is also: should social work degrees be required for child welfare staff. Many years ago I was working as part of a coalition working on looking at changing to the federal child welfare policies, and I remember sitting in a room where someone from one of the advocacy groups said: "Well, if workloads were small enough, if you just gave someone a really small caseload, then is it a job anyone could do." And so that is some of the thinking that some people have, although I think Cassandra and Tim have provided a very good overview and context for why education and preparation to do child welfare work makes a difference.

It's very important to realize as we do this centennial webinar that the links between social work and child welfare go back to the very core of the Children's Bureau. And four out of the first five heads of the Children's Bureau were social workers; even the fifth director who was a pediatrician described herself as a social pediatrician and did her initial work as a social work caseworker before she went on to get her medical degree.

So federal support for social work education and training has been part of federal child welfare programs from the very beginning. If you go back and look at the centennial brochure that was put together by the Children's Bureau and you click on issues related to leadership, it will bring you into a little blurb that talks about the kinds of support in 1935-36-37 that were made by the Children's Bureau to ensure that there were social work professionals at the state and local level working in child welfare.

Child welfare as a federal program then was furthered in 1962 with a specific program that supported discretionary grants, Title IV-B training grants, to support and give money to institutions of higher learning, universities, and especially schools of social work, to train social workers.

And then there are many, many places where you find information specifically about child welfare as a field of social work practice, where social work, leadership, and child welfare permeate the practice policy research and education; and as we've already heard today, the relevance of social work education to child welfare competencies.

In the late 1970s as people were looking at the kinds of policy changes that eventually implemented in Public Law 96-272 and the creation of the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Program, the intent was that at the same time there was federal support for the creation of the Council on Accreditation, and that as the legislation moved forward, the intent had been that it would tie child welfare practice to professional standards.

That, in fact, never happened in terms of the implementing rules that came about after 96-272 was passed. First, the Reagan Administration tried to repeal it, and eventually put together very weak legislation of very weak rules. And then, there are really no subsequent laws that have specifically addressed who should provide services in child welfare. We've had a number of laws promoting safer, stable families, the Adoption and Safe Families Act fostering connections that have addressed workforce and some training funds and such, but nothing has really specifically addressed who should be the child welfare workers; although if you go back and look at the history, there was some intent initially to do that, and there are a number reasons that has happened.

And so what happened in the mid to late 1980s, there was really a workforce crisis declared. There was a feeling that the complex needs of the children and families who were coming in contact with the child welfare system really required skilled practitioners, that there were workforce issues related to recruitment and retention, and that they affect service delivery and service quality, and you can see that in many of the outcomes of the Child and Family Service Reviews as well as the Program Improvement Plans developed to address that. And that media attention often highlights systemic problems, class action lawsuits often drive practice reforms related to workforce issues, yet there are no clear strategies.

Starting in the early 1990s, late 1980s early 1990s, I've kind of alluded to in the creation of the California Social Work Education Center and the initial ten schools of social work that became part of CalSWEC and began to use Title IV-E funds to support, providing opportunities for new child welfare workers with social workers to go into child welfare, as well as opportunities for people like Cassandra to go back to school to get a social work degree who were already working in child welfare. We did see sort of a burgeoning of efforts to have more and more schools of social work work in partnership with their child welfare agencies to access Title IV-E funding for this source. And I'll talk a little more about some of those outcomes in a few minutes.

So what we see is that there are a number of reports that have documented the problems related to the workforce in child welfare. The Government Accountability Office, foundations, national organizations; and in fact from 2003 to 2008, the Children's Bureau supported eight recruitment and retention grants, there was also a National Child Welfare Workforce Policy Workgroup that came together that promoted the use of certain changes both legislatively as well as working with the Children's Bureau to try to encourage efforts to address recruitment and retention, and some of that has been addressed through the creation of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute.

We have a lot of issues if we're thinking about the question of this webinar. So what are the kinds of issues we need to consider. We have to think about the relevance of education and training; we need to think about if we're supporting BSWs and MSWs, is there a differential of what each of them we expect to do in the workplace. Are there available social workers to work in child welfare? What are the practice outcomes we expect; what do we need to do in terms of retention; what do we need to do in terms of attraction to the field. Are there places that professional social workers want to work, and what are the opportunities for career ladders and professional growth opportunities?

And I think one of the things that we've seen in recent times, is as some issues as funding has gotten tighter, there's been sort of less opportunities for professional growth sometimes within the public system. And so people have taken their expertise that they've garnered through the specialized education they've gotten related to child welfare, and begun sometimes to serve children in other ways and other settings because of cutbacks and job freezes in some of the child welfare agencies.

One of the important studies that were done was a study that NASW did in 2004, published in 2006, that particularly looked at the issues that were affecting attracting professional social workers to work with children and families. And the issue is that attracting them to working in child welfare is not the problem, but issues about retaining them is. Because of work environment, levels of compensation, concerns about safety; when there are vacancy rates people's caseloads are very high, people are often working with people who don't have degrees and so they may not be in an environment that supports people having social work degrees, and you have increasing outsourcing of functions.

So then we also have the question: what will it take to develop and retain a competent, committed workforce with the caseload size and knowledge and skills to get the work done.

I was part working with the University of Maryland School of Social Work to do systematic review of retention research in 2005. And many studies have come out since then, but I think to some extent we enforce these factors.

And so you have here a little diagram of what some of the issues are, and a lot of this was also that when we looked at the retention studies that existed, many of them were retention studies that were particularly looking at students who had participated in IV-E programs, because people were encouraged to evaluate those efforts. So we were not always comparing people with social work education to people without social work education; sometimes it's looking at retention in terms of people who stayed and people who left.

But what do we know. We know that a professional commitment to children and families, previous work experience, education, job satisfaction, a sense of self efficacy, personal characteristics in terms of people being younger, often people being bilingual, are factors that keep people in child welfare.

Organizational factors that are critical are supervisory support, coworker peer support, salary, reasonable workload, opportunities for advancement, organizational commitment in valuing employees, a strategy of preparing students in terms of VSW and MSW education for child welfare is effective; but issues that impact retention negatively have to do with burnout,

emotional exhaustion, role overload, conflict and stress, and those are things that are often exacerbated by ineffective attention to the organizational factors that I mentioned.

So we need to think about what are those retention factors. And I'm just going to go through those next slides very quickly in terms of the personal factors that I just talked about, and so I thought about this whole idea about goodness of fit. Are we making sure that we're hiring the people who really want to be doing this job, who understand the complexity of it, who are oftentimes in situations where they're kind of really making difficult decisions, oftentimes in unsafe work environments, places that social workers go in child welfare are places that sometimes other professionals are unwilling to go, and so it's a tough job.

So what we find is that education is critical. That social workers are often more likely to stay. Social workers specialized in child welfare are the most likely to stay, and those people with less education and less relevant education are also less likely to stay.

But we also know that across the county there are huge variations in the terms of the qualifications of staff who work in child welfare. I don't think there are so many people now who don't have at least a Bachelor's Degree who are frontline child welfare workers. But there's still a lot of people with undifferentiated Bachelor's Degrees, maybe a state like California probably has about 60 percent of their workers have Master's Degrees, a state like Georgia or Florida may have as little as 10 or 15 percent. And so there's a great range when we look at these issues.

And that the whole issue, and a lot of the research that the University of Georgia has done around the whole idea of self efficacy is critically important in terms of the sense of perceived confidence in human caring. And that's often tied to issues related to the preparation that people have in terms of child welfare.

Also critically important are those organizational factors. And I want to talk some, particularly about supervision. Because supervision in many, many studies comes out to be the critical issue, that people would stay if they had a great supervisor, no matter the workload, no matter the pay. But if they had a poor supervisor then it was very unlikely that they were going to stay. And the attributes of supervisors have to do with mentoring, and also have a high level of practice knowledge.

Workers that stay oftentimes attach to supervisors; and what's interesting is another study that NASW did of its members who were working in child welfare, that professional social workers who were working in child welfare don't report the same kind of supervision problems that the general child welfare workforce reports. So you see once again a difference between the experiences of people with social work degrees from those who don't have social work degrees.

At the end of this slide set are a number of resources that I'm not going to have a chance to go through all of them, but there's a whole set of materials specific to supervision in child welfare with a report of recommendations, as well as some presentations that can be viewed for continuing education credits that people might be interested in looking at at a later point.

And so one of the things that came out of a symposium that we convened several years ago particularly about supervision as the safety net for frontline child welfare practice, was that if you want to have supervisors who have professional social work degrees, then one should really

think in an agency about hiring social workers and promoting them. Because if you don't hire social workers but you want that kind of expertise as a supervisor, and many people sort of move up the career ladder, then you really need to think about who you're hiring.

The next slide is really just kind of the elements of supervisory practice, and hopefully you can go back and look at that, as I want to move forward.

What are the strategies that impact retention? Improved training is one that everyone says is common, but no one's really studying if it works. The most studied one, as I said, is Title IV-E education for child welfare practice. You see outcomes related to better service outcomes, better attitudes towards children and families, a sense of self efficacy, commitment to the agency, feeling valued, and oftentimes people end up also with a special job title and position.

But because the Title IV-E training dollars are kind of shrinking over time due to its tie to 1996 AFDC eligibility rates, some of the things that Ken addressed related to workers who might have [been] able to take leave to go to school and those kinds of things aren't happening now; the Social Work Policy Institute did recently do a survey of schools of social work to look at some of the changes that were happening in terms of Title IV-E dollars and the use of them in schools of social work. And we do see some retrenchments in a number of states where the programs are being narrowed because of the availability of funds, at just the exact time that we see a greater focus on social and emotional wellbeing, and a time when having better prepared more knowledgeable staff to address some of those skills that Ken and Cassandra both talked about as being critically important.

Looking at the staff turnover and child abuse, this is a study that was done in California, but I think it's important because they were comparing sort of better functioning counties and lower functioning counties. That issues related to staff pay and compliance with recognized practice standards, and practice standards do support the importance of a child welfare degree for child welfare workers.

So we also see that in terms of a social work degree, sometimes the research is a little inconsistent. Because some places say that those with the least relevant education are the most likely to leave, but there are also a few studies that say the MSWs are most likely to leave. And in some ways that can make sense, too, because they have more job opportunities. And they take that knowledge that they have in child welfare and will also continue to work with the same children and families, from maybe in a system that's easier to work with.

Once again, it's hard with some of the research, because it's only looking at those with social work degrees. And then I think there's an important study that Rick Barth, Nancy Dickenson, Mimi Chapman and some others did several years ago using data from the National Study of Child and Adolescent Wellbeing that found that the percent of degreed social workers in child welfare was now slightly less than 40 percent. And that's an increase from about 28 percent that was found in the late 1980s, and I think a lot of that is due to the investments that have been made in states like California and Pennsylvania and others, that have really put attention to the education of social workers for child welfare work.

So if we see that some of the research is inconsistent, what can account for those differences. Some of it just has to do with different questions that are being asked in the research, and we

tried to combine them together and we really can't. Agency expectations of the employer. What is the job. Is it a job where people are kind of pushing paper, or are we really expecting child welfare workers and child welfare supervisors to really have the skills and knowledge to make a difference in the children's lives.

Are there other job options in the community. Because some of the retention research says if there aren't other job options, even those people who are very dissatisfied tend to stay. What's the service delivery environment; what are the issues related to supervision; and are there ethical conflicts that workers are facing.

I think that when we look at a social work degree in specialized child welfare training, we're really thinking about the fact that if we want to have retention and improved outcomes for children, knowing the job, less pre-service and in-service training required, an understanding about cultural competency and cultural humility and its importance, and ethical practice and attention to the person/environment orientation, that there is payoff to have a social work prepared workforce.

And so what do you need to achieve better outcomes? You need support for professional social work education for staff, for those who are already there and for those who are going to be coming in; as Cassandra was talking about, we need to apply evidence-informed both practice strategies as well as retention strategies; we need to promote policies that fund training and social work education; we have to create and stay in the kind of university agency partnerships that Ken was talking about. We need to build healthy organizational culture and climate, and we need to support high quality and supportive supervision.

I think that in the recent years there have been a few policy opportunities besides the efforts that have been made to use Title IV-E across the country in 35 to 40 states. In the reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, ____ [unclear] was asked for of states around who the CPS personnel are, what their education and training requirements are, because as a whole we don't really know that information.

I know that it's been addressed in other webinars, but the focus at the Children's Bureau around promoting social and emotional wellbeing for children has real implications, I think, for the workforce; and in fact you can kind of see that in terms of the Title IV-E Children's Bureau's Child Welfare Policy Manual when it talks about the topics that are covered by Title IV-E training. That's been amended to add some of those areas related to social and emotional wellbeing, and can be practiced through some of those models that Ken was talking about.

So I'm going to go straight through this very quickly -- in summing up, one of the things I want people to think about is what kinds of questions need to be asked. So for someone who's seeking child welfare employment, they should ask: is it what I really want to do. Do I have to the prerequisite knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to prepare to do this job.

When staff are being selected for child welfare positions, they should ask: does this candidate have the professional commitment and experience to take on this job and deal with the related stress.

Child welfare supervisors should ask: do I have the knowledge and skills to provide support and case-focused supervision to my staff? And do I have support from *my* superiors.

Agency administrators should ask: does the agency provide the necessary supports -- supervisory, career ladder, working environment -- that will attract workers and keep them at the agency?

And universities should ask, especially social work education programs: can we strengthen our partnership with state and local child welfare agencies to provide education and training to current and prospective staff, and to develop and implement research and program evaluation efforts that can help guide agency practice.

And with that I will stop, and open back to Elizabeth who will moderate for questions. But there are several more slides of this, a number of web links and resources that I hope the listeners will take advantage of.

Elizabeth Mertinko: [01:14:35] Perfect. Thank you so much, Joan. We will actually be posting the slides on our website, so I know we went through a number of those very quickly. So they will be available for folks to go back and look through at a little bit more of a leisurely pace.

Laurie, we'd like to go ahead and open the lines up for question and discussion at this time.

Laurie: [01:14:54] Thank you very much. If you would like to ask a question, please make sure your line isn't muted and record your first name only and your state. Once again, for your questions press Star-1, unmute your line, and record just your first name and your state. One moment for the first question. (pause) There are some questions coming through, one moment please.

We do have a question from Nancy, I don't know what state you're from, Nancy, your line is open.

Nancy Dickenson: [01:15:39] Nancy Dickenson from the University of Maryland in Baltimore. This has been a very interesting webinar, and I appreciate all the presenters. One of the things that Title IV-E intended with their stipend program is to increase the diversity of the child welfare workforce. And I had a question for Cassandra about that particular outcome in Imperial County, which is so diverse. Did you see an increase in your diverse staff wanting to go back for MSWs?

Cassandra: [01:16:14] Yes. Actually as far as diversity in roles within the organization, we had within our group cohort, we had line staff, we had supervisors, and we had a program manager. Within the current cohort we have social worker assistants, social workers, line staff, and staff service analysts who are participating in the program currently.

And then as far as the ethnic makeup, again, we are predominately Hispanic. And pretty much that is consistent with what we're seeing in the previous cohort that I participated in, and the current cohort.

Nancy: Okay, thank you.

Laurie: And once again, to ask your questions please press Star then 1 on your phone and record just your first name and state. And there are no further questions coming through at this time.

Elizabeth: [01:17:39] Cassandra, I also had a question for you. When we were planning the presentation, I think one of the things that you mentioned very briefly was that when you pursued additional education there were a number of benefits to your practice. But it also created some tension or some challenges, or there are some tensions that exist between workers who have a higher educational level and workers who have a lower educational level, and I was wondering if you'd be willing to speak to that for just a minute or two.

Cassandra: [01:18:06] Some of the challenges that I referred to in our previous conversations, Joan spoke to them, she hit on them briefly as did Ken Nakamura, in that there is the challenge of management or line staff who have not necessarily gone through the discipline of formal education and not understanding the benefits. Not necessarily as a result of... in general, and just not understanding what can come from it or a lack of motivation, just basically not being able to relate to what can be provided if you go back to school and how that can relate or correlate to being able to provide better services for our clients and our community.

I don't look at it in a negative sense, I look at it more as a challenge in helping those individuals in my day to day practice, helping those individuals understand what I've learned, and how we can grow as an organization or as an agency in providing services that would be most effective for our clients, and the challenges that our clients face in their daily lives here in Imperial County.

Elizabeth: [01:19:55] Excellent. Thank you. Laurie, do we have other questions online?

Laurie: There is one coming through, one moment please. Nancy, your line is back open.

Nancy: [01:20:17] Thank you. This is Nancy from the University of Maryland in Baltimore. Ken, I have a question for you. You gave some wonderful examples of the projects that your IV-E students participate in. What evidence do you have that those particular specially educated IV-E students would do their work better in that setting than your regular MSW students at San Diego State.

Ken: [01:20:44] Hi, Nancy, it's good to hear your voice. That's a great question, because I can't claim that, but what I can tell you is as students continue to have a greater understanding in the Title IV-E program, what are both persistent and current issues regarding the welfare of children and families. It's easy to see how quickly they integrate that into the kinds of projects or efforts they want to make at the various settings they're in.

So for example, the 150 unit apartment complex in the city Al Cajon. The reason they wanted to approach it is they realized it was an area that was getting a high number of calls. And as different workers went out dealing with a number of situations, some of which had to do with the environmental conditions that families were living in, they knew that, but organizationally or as an agency, individuals didn't think about doing anything about it, depending on who they were seeing or what else their work took them to.

But when I had a small group, 3 county employee students, they not only recognized this, they began to think about how their experiences working in the agency -- they had somewhere between 5 and 8 years experience, I believe, the 3 of them -- they started to think about how frequent their interactions were with that location, and began to think about what are the things they know from their education experience with a IV-E focus, about what to look for.

And so they were surprised to be able to go knock on doors and not have families who had seen some of them come in to handle investigations. They were assuming most of these families wouldn't talk to them. But when they found they actually approached them and engaged them around the welfare of their children, the families actually invited them in and wanted to talk to them.

How would that be different than another social work student? I can't say, because I didn't try that part; but what I can say is they utilize their experience in child welfare, their increasing education and looking at child welfare issues from a social work perspective, and then we're excited about trying to integrate that into the way they worked at the setting.

Nancy: [01:23:08] Great, thanks.

Laurie: [01:23:12] And we do have another question, this is from Patricia; would you please state your state.

Patricia: [01:23:21] Hi, this is Patricia Brincefield with Child Welfare Information Gateway in Virginia. I've heard some discussions recently about the impact of technology, text technology, communications technology like texting and email and Twitter, and the impact it's having on worker's ability to engage productively face to face with their coworkers and children and families. Would anyone care to comment about that? (pause) Guess not.

Elizabeth: [01:24:07] Cassandra, not to put you on the spot, but in your daily practice, are you using those types of technologies to connect with families in any way? Or is that shaping the way that the work is getting done?

Cassandra: [01:24:17] I'm sorry, but can you repeat the question? I kind of missed a piece of that.

Elizabeth: Patricia, are you still on the line?

Speaker: [01:24:28] Yes. I know we had a very lively discussion about this at the IV-E roundtable in Texas, about the impact of new communication technologies such as texting and email -- which is not so new -- and Twitter, on the effectiveness of worker's ability to communicate with one another directly and face to face, and with children and families. Is there any comment on that?

Elizabeth: [01:25:09] We're not prepared to comment now; I understand it's a big subject.

Cassandra: [01:25:16] I'm sorry, I can give you a sense of where we're at with regards to that question. We're very big on texting each other -- and when I say "we" I mean between myself and my workers. And that's been for awhile already, especially when they're out in the field, and maybe they can't get a hold of me or I cannot get a hold of them so I text them, they text me back

with updates on their status, on their location, or what actually is going on with their situation. So social media in general has been a very useful tool for us.

Recently we started noticing here that our clients are also texting us and sending us messages when there is a situation, an emergency, or event, about something that may be occurring or working or not working in their particular situation. So we're starting to see more of that mode of communication in expressing what their needs are, and we welcome it. Because the bottom line is, it is opening up those lines of communication in some way that is able to get us to start building from that.

The other aspect that we're very supportive of, and we're getting to that point where we're hoping that we can build on it more, is Facebook. Because as I made reference to earlier in my piece, that I work with the youth transitioning from foster care and those going into extended foster care, both the dependents and the probation youth, well they basically love to accept invitations to be friends on Facebook, or to communicate on personal messages through Facebook. Not necessarily using the public thread of messaging, but the private abilities that Facebook offers.

We've been very successful here in locating some of our youth who have left their placements or who we're not sure what's going on with them, don't know their current status, or maybe there's some sort of emergency happening within their situation, we're able to connect with them via Facebook and the others, the texting.

I can't speak too much on the Twittering, because I don't have a Twitter account and so I don't do that. But I am a strong advocate of the texting and the Facebooking, and how we have internally through management discussed what is appropriate and not appropriate, and being professional in that social media context.

We've also had discussions with our youth when we see things on their Facebook accounts that are concerning to us. So we're able to pull them and in sense talk to them about some of the conversations that we're seeing happening amongst themselves and their friends and family members or whatever, and our response hasn't been that negative.

Most of our youth are very receptive to listening to what we have to say, or taking into account some of the advice that we're providing them. So again, overall our experience here in Imperial County I can say has been positive. And we learn every day of something that we have to, in a sense, accommodate when we're using that sort of mode of communication.

Elizabeth: [01:30:26] Thank you, Cassandra. Laurie, do we have any other questions on the line?

Laurie: There are no further questions in the queue at this time, but as another reminder, to ask your questions please press Star-1 on your phone and record your first name and state.

Elizabeth: [01:30:43] While we're waiting to see if there's any final questions, Cassandra, you couldn't have said that better if I had coached you, because our November webinar will be on Social Media. And we'll be looking at some of those ethical issues that can arise when child welfare workers start using social media, including sort of a discussion of what happens if you're working with young people and you see something on their page that is concerning, or what's your obligation to respond, what are the ethics of using social media and being able to learn

things about your client that maybe in the past you wouldn't have learned before that was such a common communication vehicle. So without even knowing it, you were giving an early advertisement for our November webinar, so thank you.

Cassandra: You're welcome.

Elizabeth: Laurie, do we have anyone else in the queue?

Laurie: [01:31:28] Yes, we do have another one. A gentleman, I believe the recording said Steve, your line is open.

Steve: [01:31:33] Hi. My name is Steve, I'm with ASW Connecticut, and I'm just wondering if quickly you can mention if there's any strategies that you think might be helpful in getting our state agency, child welfare agency, to hire more professional social workers. (pause)

Joan: [01:31:56] I'll take a stab at that.

Elizabeth: [01:31:57] I was going to say, that's obviously a tough question.

Steve: And we've obviously been working on it for a long time.

Joan: [01:32:05] Right. So some of the things to really think about have to do with some of those issues about retention; and some of them have to do, I think, with some of the quality issues that Cassandra really spoke about in terms of... here she'd been working in the system for a really long time serving children and families. And as much education as she got, having that social work degree made some real difference in terms of how she viewed families. And I think there's some research that Charlie Auerbach and Brenda McGowan did in New York City that really get at that issue also.

It's really having a different approach to working with the children and families; it's really about collaboration and partnership and sort of understanding the system, and not just kind of moving people through it, but really trying to make a change in the lives of children and families who come in contact with the child welfare system; and I think that's what bringing a professional social work perspective to child welfare makes the difference about, so I think that's one of the pieces.

I think the second has to do with retention and the cost of turnover. That turnover is looked at, sometimes it's about a third of the worker's salary, and I can see people in Connecticut make a lot of money. And so if you think about what the hiring costs are, that you can make a lot earlier investment. So those are two things I can think about.

Elizabeth: [01:33:45] Ken and Cassandra, did you have anything you wanted to add to that?

Ken: [01:33:49] Well, I would want to ask Steve if -- because I'm unfamiliar -- if in Connecticut there are Title IV-E programs at all.

Steve: [01:33:58] We have really underutilized Title IV-E. It's a very small program in the state, but we are way behind most states on that.

Ken: [01:34:06] Well the only reason I ask, is I think that's another avenue. One is hopefully the outcomes that master level social workers can provide in the care of children and families. But I think the other is, how do you maximize universities in your state or local communities to take effort and initiative to build stronger programs that benefit public services. And one way would be for the universities to negotiate stronger with the state around the importance of bringing new people into the field, [over-talk] their experiences; and then I'd like to believe that just by doing that, attraction to hire master level social workers because they'd be available and skills in working in child welfare would increase.

Steve: Thanks.

Elizabeth: Laurie, do you have any other callers on the line?

Laurie: No ma'am, there are no further questions in the queue.

Elizabeth: [01:35:11] And we've actually run a little bit over, so I'd like to thank all of you for your participation in today's discussion, and a special thanks to Cassandra Gregory and Ken Nakamura and Joan Levy Zlotnik for sharing their time and knowledge with us to advance the discussion of this important topic, and for giving us a few extra minutes to take some additional questions from the line.

Please visit the Children's Bureau Centennial website at the address shown for more information on past and future webinars, as well as the slides from today's presentation and a recording of today's webinar. So if you have colleagues that you wish had heard this, is it available as a recorded webinar for future use.

Our next topical webinar will be on October 22 and is entitled "Who Should Our Clients Be? Differential Response and the Provision of Services to Voluntary Clients." Registration information for this webinar will be made available on the centennial website at the address shown above.

Finally, I'd like to remind you to complete the webinar evaluation that will appear on your computer at the end of today's discussion. These evaluations provide us with an important source of information as we continue to plan events in celebration of CB's centennial year.

Thank you again for joining us today, and again, special thanks to our three speakers.

[End Webinar.]