

Frontline Job Redesign

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Implementation Team

The QIC-WD worked with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Child Welfare Division (CWD) to establish an Implementation Team to lead the development and implementation of their [intervention](#). The Implementation Team included the Site Implementation Manager (SIM); the project Training and Coaching Specialist; the Data Coordinator; representatives from Human Resources (HR), Civil Service and the Department's training unit; representatives from the [intervention parishes](#) (from administrators to frontline workers); and three members of the QIC-WD (representing expertise in workforce, implementation, and evaluation). Members were selected for their leadership abilities, knowledge, experience, and their willingness to critically examine the Louisiana DCFS and make recommendations to improve staff retention. The Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare also provided instrumental leadership on the team as it developed the intervention.

The Implementation Team met regularly to review relevant data and make decisions. They were authorized to seek additional data and create ad hoc teams to learn more. The SIM, the Project Training and Coaching Specialist (a Program Operations Manager assigned to work directly with the SIM), and Data Coordinator positions were partially funded by the QIC-WD, all other representatives participated as part of the "other duties, as assigned" aspect of their job. The Implementation Team met face-to-face monthly, until the spring of 2020, when the pandemic required meetings to be held virtually. In the spring of 2021, the Implementation Team meetings moved to a semi-monthly schedule. DCFS worked closely with QIC-WD to meet an agreed-upon timeline for the project.

Preparing for Implementation

The Implementation Team engaged in a series of activities to help the agency prepare for the implementation of the intervention:

- Kick-off presentations - First with the Implementation Team and leaders from the three pilot regions. Then with field staff, supervisors, managers, area directors, and agency trainers. All the presentations were designed to build understanding and obtain support for the intervention.
- Teaming Unit Supervisors and Managers training - "It's a Wonderful Team" was an interactive training where attendees received individual-style assessments and engaged in presentations to prepare for their new responsibilities under the job redesign. The objective was to establish a common framework for leading and working in a new team-oriented environment and align each team's leadership knowledge, skills and abilities and approach to job redesign.
- Risk Assessment and Management – A process to identify, manage, and mitigate the potential risks to successful implementation of the job redesign intervention, such as staff turnover, or natural disasters such as a hurricane.

The Louisiana DCFS strategically designed a staged roll-out of its intervention. This was designed to build support for the job redesign using a hand-selected cadre of managers, supervisors, and frontline workers to create the newly configured teams for initial implementation. The staged roll-out also ensured there was no "lag" between training and the application of the new practices. This process allowed the Implementation Team to make necessary changes to the training after a period of implementation. There were three phased roll-

outs, with new teams created in each of the experimental parishes in each roll-out.



Implementation Supports

The Implementation Team developed the following set of products and practices to support the implementation of the intervention:

- Job description, job classification, and pay schedule for the new child welfare team specialist (CWTS) position, to dovetail with the existing classification scheme.
- Targeted training sessions regarding specific roles in the new model.
 - For supervisors and managers, the training included team building and leadership development.
 - For CWTS, the training included special sessions of the new worker training (NWT) to familiarize them with the work performed in child welfare.
 - Other training focused on assisting existing staff and supervisors with learning roles not previously practiced (such as Family Services/ Child Protective Services).
 - Additional special training sessions were identified and developed throughout the implementation.

- CWTS hiring process was designed to include job-specific competencies, necessary qualifications for the position, and a specific interview format for the CWTS position.
- Strategic communication to share information about the implementation, such as:
 - Digital stories from supervisors and frontline workers regarding instances of successful implementation of the intervention;
 - E-mail blasts designed specifically to encourage fidelity to the intervention; and
 - Newsletters detailing upcoming meetings, training opportunities, and success stories from the field.
- Office supplies, such as whiteboards for supervisors and desktop file organizers for CWTS, were identified as needed team supports by agency staff.
- Role cards designed as quick reference aids that defined each team member's tasks in the intervention. Role cards were made for [Prevention](#) and [Permanency](#) workers.
- Checklist (or task assignment sheet) that workers filled out with tasks for their CWTS. It was reviewed by the supervisor before giving the assignment to CWTS.
- Revised Personnel Evaluation System (PES) focused on how the work was done in the new model, designed to measure adherence to the model.

Another key implementation support was funding. In addition to partial funding provided by the QIC-WD for the SIM, Data Coordinator, and Project Training and Coaching Specialist, DCFS funded CWTS positions. Initially, funding was strategically allocated for a limited number of the new CWTS positions. After the first year, however, DCFS sought and obtained additional funding for CWTS positions in all three intervention parishes.

The Implementation Team also used a variety of tools to gather feedback and inform implementation.

- Focus Groups were facilitated by QIC-WD staff during the early stages of implementation. Groups were

asked to comment on what was working well, what challenges they were encountering, what additional supports would be helpful as they learned to work in the redesigned model, and what, if any, changes to the model they would recommend. Focus groups were held for the first two groups of units to roll out. (The SIM and QIC-WD team chose not to conduct focus groups with participants from the third and final roll-out group due to the stress on the workforce in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.) Separate groups were held for CWTS, caseworkers, and supervisors/managers and all offices and programs were represented.

- “Vision and Voices” meetings were scheduled and facilitated by the SIM on-site in each of the experimental regions (until the pandemic, when they moved to virtual). These were ongoing opportunities for central office leadership to hear about successes and barriers directly from frontline staff, to help develop solutions to those barriers, and to encourage fidelity to the intervention.

- Community of Practice Calls were hosted by central office leadership for the particular areas of practice in the new model, specifically: prevention workers, permanency workers, CWTS, and supervisors/managers. The calls were designed to support fidelity to the intervention over time. They were also opportunities to hear directly from frontline personnel regarding potential barriers to implementing the model and develop approaches to eliminate those barriers.
- On-going training/SWAT teams (the acronym refers to the quick response time required, and the initials have no intrinsic meaning) which included a training consultant, the On the Job Training Team (OTJTT), and a Regional Program Specialist. These teams provided training, consultation, and program guidance to managers and other child welfare staff to maintain consistent practice of the intervention in the wake of staff turnover. The OTJTT was developed as part of the Implementation Team’s risk assessment process to support new staff in the field, with the goal of reducing turnover.