

Appendix A - Salary Plan Summary

The development of this salary proposal should be viewed as one part of the overall implementation plan. The salary proposal was completed in collaboration and consultation with SC DSS, consultant Sue Steib, and Public Consulting Group. While this is a significant first step in improving salaries of child welfare case workers, it is a living document that will be updated regularly to continue to address improvements of the SC child welfare workforce. The initial steps outlined in this plan will provide immediate steps within a longer term, more in-depth plan to address salary needs in child welfare. This document is based on the goal that all child welfare caseworker salaries will rise to the SC living wage amount as soon as possible, with ongoing increases in salary commensurate with experience. The document also reemphasizes information from Ms. Steib's report related to the impact of the child welfare workforce turnover on outcomes to children and families, as well as fiscal costs associated with turnover.

Turnover in Child Welfare

Jurisdictions across the U.S. are grappling with turnover in child welfare, directly impacting both children and families and the fiscal bottom line of the organization. Turnover in child welfare has significant fiscal costs, decreased morale of remaining workers saddled with higher caseloads, and loss of expertise from the organization. These factors have a direct negative effect on outcomes for children, youth, and families. The US General Accounting Office (2003)¹ estimated that turnover in child welfare workforce was between 30 - 40 percent nationwide, with the average number of years' experience of a frontline child welfare worker being less than two years. According to Barak, Nissly and Levin (2001)², high turnover in child welfare has negative implications for the quality, consistency and expertise needed to address child safety.

Turnover impacts child welfare outcomes throughout the continuum of services. The US General Accounting Office (2003) found that direct practitioner turnover delays the timeliness of investigations and limits the frequency of worker visits with children, resulting in diminished child safety. The National Center on Crime and Delinquency (2006)³ determined that there was a direct correlation between high turnover rates and higher rates of maltreatment recurrence after three, six and twelve months. Ryan, Garnier, Zyphur, and Zhai (2006)⁴ found that children who have multiple direct practitioners often experience outcomes that are more negative than children with one direct practitioner.

Flower, McDonald and Sumski (2006)⁵ discovered that an increase in the number of direct practitioners decreases the chances of timely permanency for children -- within the studied cohort, children with one direct practitioner achieved permanency 74.5 percent of the time with the percentage dropping to 17.5 percent for children with two workers. Flower et al. (2006) also noted negative impacts on length of stay in foster care for children with multiple workers. The US General Accounting Office (2003) also reported that high turnover rates disrupt continuity of services, particularly when newly assigned direct practitioners must conduct or re-evaluate educational, health, and safety assessments.

¹ United States General Accounting Office. (2003). Child welfare: HHS could play a greater role in helping child welfare agencies recruit and retain staff (GAO-03-357). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

² Barak, M.E., Nissly, J.A & Levin, A. (2001). Antecedents to retention and turnover among child welfare, social work, and other human service employees: What can we learn from past research? A review and meta-analysis. *Social Service Review*, 75(4), 625-662.

³National Council on Crime and Delinquency. (2006). Relationship between staff turnover, child welfare system functioning and recurrent child abuse. Retrieved on December 4, 2015, from http://www.cpsr.us/workforceplanning/documents/06.02_Relation_Staff.pdf

⁴ Ryan, J.P., Garnier, P., Zyphur, M. & Zhai, F. (2005). Investigating the effects of caseworker characteristics in child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28(9), 993-1006.

⁵ Flower, C., McDonald, J. & Sumski, M. (2005). Review of turnover in Milwaukee county private agency child welfare ongoing case management staff. Retrieved December 13, 2015, from http://www.uh.edu/socialwork/_docs/cwep/national-iv-e/turnoverstudy.pdf

Return on Investment

The fiscal costs linked to the rapid and constant turnover of direct practitioners is significant to organizations and taxpayers. Estimates for the actual cost of turnover for a direct practitioner position is a combination of direct costs (advertising, time spent interviewing, background and reference checks) as well as indirect costs (such as low morale and increased workloads when staff leave, liability of the organization due to inexperience & impact on outcomes of safety, permanence and well-being). Not only is there a huge fiscal impact, but there is a negative organizational impact, which leads to the vicious cycle of decreased retention. The investment up front far outweighs the loss of funding that results with high turnover.

Workforce Hiring Levels

To recruit and retain a quality workforce, South Carolina proposes to incorporate education, training, and demonstration of social work competencies in hiring and salary considerations. This is the initial step in the implementation plan to structure the workforce in a way that will deliver quality services to children and families. It is important to note that a multi-pronged approach over a period is required for the hiring and retention structure for an effort to hire an increased number of bachelors and master's level social workers. In addition, if the training plan changes for SC DSS, the training and competency demonstration could also change. Further, other strategies such as addressing secondary traumatic stress, cultivating a positive organizational climate and culture, and a fully developed training and professional development plan are important to forwarding the implementation plan. *Table 1* below represents the recommended hiring and promotion levels for consideration. To assess the current workforce, PCG offers three options from which to choose.

1. Decrease meetings and other administrative duties for supervisors for five weeks to allow them to dedicate five to ten hours to assess the competency level of one worker per week.
2. Continue current supervisor duties as they stand and extend the timeframe in which supervisors will assess workers.
3. Contract with an organization who has subject matter experts who have been in leadership positions to assess the workers competency level, in conjunction with input from the supervisor.

Table 1: Proposed DSS Child Welfare Caseworker Hiring and Promotion Levels

Levels	Experience & Education	Training & Competency Demonstration	Assumptions & Considerations
Trainee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bachelor's in Social Work, Behavioral Science, or Social Science • No experience to one-year experience in related field • Prefer child welfare experience • BSW or MSW preferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion* of initial 6-week basic training course, moves person to Level 1 • Completion of onboarding plan • Demonstrated understanding of the ten competencies in the Competency Based Interview*. • Supervisory field visit skills and competency evaluation developed from the ten competencies** 	<p>The level descriptions assume that workers are hired with the basic education and no experience within child welfare. However, if an applicant is hired with the education and experience outlined in each level, their beginning salary would be within that specific level.</p> <p>Productivity and quality standards for performance could be a consideration for advancing to the next salary level. Example measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of assessments
Level I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bachelor's in Social Work, Behavioral Science, or Social Science • BSW or MSW preferred • Six months to one year's experience in related field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of all required training for year one, moves person to Level 2 • Demonstrated understanding of the ten competencies in the Competency Based Interview*. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer child welfare experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory field visit skills and competency evaluation** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity compared to other new workers • Number of visits with children and parents • Number of foster home visits • Quality of documentation based on specific criteria • SC practice model competencies <p><i>Please note this is the initial draft plan and the state training plan is still in development. If the training plan changes, the salary plan may also evolve.</i></p>
Level II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bachelor's in Social Work, Behavioral Science, or Social Science • Master's degree preferred • <u>Minimum</u> of two years of experience in child welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of specialized forensic and specialized training, moves person to Level 3 • Supervisory field visit skills and competency evaluation** 	
Level III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bachelor's in Social Work, Behavioral Science, or Social Science • WITH Minimum of three or more years of experience in child welfare <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Social Work, Behavioral Science, or Social Science WITH minimum of two years' experience in child welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion advanced level training both provided by SC DSS and by other organizations specific to child welfare • Supervisory field visit skills and competency evaluation** • SC DSS is considering this position to be very specialized. In the initial document, this level of education and experience is placed at level IV but could move to a higher level and pay band in the future. 	

All applicants will be screened through the Competency Based Interview (CBI) process.

*Completion includes passing a course exam with at least an 85% score. The ten competencies are listed below.

** Supervisory evaluation of practice competencies in the field during a home visit or child and family team meeting will be implemented.

*** Initially, DSS will consider all applications with a bachelor's degree in any subject for positions at this time, with a preference given to BSW and MSW. However, in the June 2019 plan revision, a timeline with the goal of hiring only BSW and MSW will be outlined.

Workforce Recruitment, Screening & Selection:

PCG recommends implementation of the Child Welfare Caseworker Competency Based Screening and Selection Process, which has been tested and utilized to good effect by a variety of organizations in states such as Maine, North Carolina, Maryland, Louisiana and Michigan to name a few. This is considered a best practice according to the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, and many organizations have utilized this model to hire direct practitioners, with demonstrated gains in job matching and long-term retention. The model, outlined below, involves rating applicants on ten competencies proven advantageous in the direct practitioner role. These ten competencies include: interpersonal relations, adaptability, communication and observation skills, planning and organizing work, analytical thinking, motivation, self-awareness and confidence, sense of mission, and teamwork. PCG recommends a choice of two approaches for statewide implementation of the competency-based interview.

1. Hire consultants who have expertise in this model to train a core state training team. The state training team should be a team of trainers who will train all supervisors and managers across the state in the competency-based interview model. The core group will be trained to deliver the training themselves, building SCDSS capacity to continuously manage training new supervisors and managers in the process. The consultants would co-train with the new trainers initially, to allow increased learning and consistency to delivery of the training.

2. Hire consultants who have expertise in this model to train all supervisors and managers within the state across a three to six-month period (depending on number of staff needing training). Within the broad training, include a core state training team that will build capacity to train themselves. This choice will quickly train all supervisors to facilitate the competency-based interview.

The interview consists of the following components, which are rated by three interviewers using a structured, scored rating tool, which limits the natural biases that can occur in traditional interviews. There are three interviewers, all who are rating the applicant themselves first, then who discuss their ratings and come to consensus on a total for each question. Through this process bias is less prevalent and group discussions and perspectives help to manage any potential partiality.

Table 2: Proposed Competency Based Screening and Selection Process

Interview Components	Time & Participants	Description
Realistic Job Video Preview	30 minutes (applicant only)	The applicant watches a realistic job preview video prior to scheduling the face to face interview. The video depicts a “day in the life” of a direct practitioner in child protective services. Included in the video are real direct practitioners that discuss both rewards and challenges of the work and demonstrations of direct practitioners “in the field”. This video can be paired with a pre-screening interview of basic questions that helps supervisors and managers select qualified applicants to interview.
Prepare for Written Exercise	30 minutes (applicant only)	Before the interview, the applicant reviews a case study for which they must write a case summary at the end of the interview. Information is missing from the case study, and in order to fully analyze the case and write a sufficient summary, the applicant prepares questions to draw needed information from the interview team. The candidate reviews the case material and takes notes in preparation for asking further questions.
Competency Based Interview Questions	45 minutes (interview team and applicant)	The interview team asks the applicant specific questions from an interview tool, allowing the applicant a limited amount of time to answer all questions. The model provides two tools – one for applicants without experience and one for veteran direct practitioners. All interview questions are based on the top ten competencies required to perform the job duties of a direct practitioner.
Fact Finding Interview	15 minutes (interview team and applicant)	During this part of the interview, the applicant asks questions he or she formulated to fill in gaps in the case study. The interview team provides answers if the applicant asks the right questions. This portion of the interview allows the interview team to experience the applicant’s persistence and questioning abilities.
Written Case Summary Exercise	30 minutes (applicant only)	After asking their questions, the applicant writes an analysis and summary of the case, using information in the case study and from the fact-finding interview.

Fiscal Considerations

An updated Salary Schedule is proposed that corresponds with each level's required background, experience, and education requirements for each of the levels proposed in Table 1 above. Table 3, below, represents the proposed baseline salary for DSS employees. The baseline salary applies to all employees except for those with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), Master of Social Worker (MSW), or frontline supervisors. Currently, the average caseworker at DSS, who also does not have a social work degree, earns \$35,541.

The baseline starting salaries for caseworkers classified as Trainees is \$40,000. Once a caseworker completes training and moves to Level 1, they receive a subsequent 15% increase in salary. A caseworker will receive a 2.5% increase in pay when they move from Level 1 to Level 2 and from Level 2 to Level 3. It is estimated that most caseworkers should move from Level 1 to Level 2 in 1-2 years, and therefore most caseworkers will fall into Level 2. Therefore, **most caseworkers will reach South Carolina's living wage in no more than 2-3 years, and any caseworker with a specialized degree in Social Work, as well as supervisors, will receive a starting salary above the identified living wage.**

The key below provides an overview of how caseworkers and supervisor positions fit within South Carolina's Classified Pay Bands:

<u>Pay Band</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Midpoint</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
4	\$26,988.00	\$38,460.00	\$49,932.00
5	\$32,838.00	\$46,799.00	\$60,760.00

- All caseworkers and supervisors classified as Trainees will be classified as Pay Band 4.
- All Level 1 caseworkers will be classified as Pay Band 4, and Level 1 supervisors will be classified as Pay Band 5.
- All Level 2 and 3 caseworkers and supervisors will be classified as Pay Band 5.

Table 3: Proposed Baseline Salary for DSS Caseworkers

Years Experience	Baseline Salary			
	Training	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0	\$40,000.00	\$46,000.00		
1		\$46,230.00	\$47,385.75	
2		\$46,461.15	\$47,859.61	\$49,056.10
3		\$46,693.46	\$48,338.20	\$49,791.94
4		\$46,926.92	\$48,821.59	\$50,538.82
5		\$47,161.56	\$49,309.80	\$51,296.90
6		\$47,397.37	\$49,802.90	\$52,066.35
7		\$47,634.35	\$50,300.93	\$52,847.35
8		\$47,872.52	\$50,803.94	\$53,640.06
9		\$48,111.89	\$51,311.98	\$54,444.66
10		\$48,352.45	\$51,825.10	\$55,261.33

**These amounts do not include the additional cost increase for certain fringe benefits (Retirement, FICA, and Worker's Compensation).*

Table 4, below, represents the proposed baseline salary for DSS employees who hold a Bachelor of Social Work degree. Because these workers have a specialized degree in social work, these caseworkers will receive a salary 2.5% higher than the proposed baseline salary at the time of hire. Currently, the average DSS caseworker with a BSW degree earns approximately \$35,885 per year. This does not include supervisors. Currently, approximately 14.4% of DSS caseworkers have a BSW.

Table 4: Proposed Salary for DSS Caseworkers with a BSW

BSW Enhancement (2.5%)				
Years Experience	Training	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0	\$41,000.000	\$47,150.00		
1		\$47,385.75	\$48,570.39	
2		\$47,622.68	\$49,056.10	\$50,282.50
3		\$47,860.79	\$49,546.66	\$51,036.74
4		\$48,100.10	\$50,042.13	\$51,802.29
5		\$48,340.60	\$50,542.55	\$52,579.32
6		\$48,582.30	\$51,047.97	\$53,368.01
7		\$48,825.21	\$51,558.45	\$54,168.53
8		\$49,069.34	\$52,074.04	\$54,981.06
9		\$49,314.68	\$52,594.78	\$55,805.78
10		\$49,561.26	\$53,120.72	\$56,642.86

**These amounts do not include the additional cost increase for certain fringe benefits (Retirement, FICA, and Worker's Compensation).*

Table 5, below, represents the proposed baseline salary for DSS employees who hold a Master of Social Work degree. Because these workers have a specialized degree in social work, these caseworkers will receive a salary 5% higher than the proposed baseline salary at the time of hire. Currently, the average DSS caseworker with an MSW earns \$35,417 per year. This does not include supervisors. Currently, approximately 2.9% of DSS caseworkers have an MSW.

Table 5: Proposed Salary for DSS Caseworkers with a MSW

MSW Enhancement (5%)				
Years Experience	Training	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0	\$42,000.00	\$48,300.00		
1		\$48,469.05	\$49,680.78	
2		\$48,638.69	\$50,177.58	\$51,432.02
3		\$48,808.93	\$50,679.36	\$52,203.50
4		\$48,979.76	\$51,186.15	\$52,986.56
5		\$49,151.19	\$51,698.01	\$53,781.35
6		\$49,323.22	\$52,215.00	\$54,588.08
7		\$49,495.85	\$52,737.15	\$55,406.90
8		\$49,669.08	\$53,264.52	\$56,238.00
9		\$49,842.93	\$53,797.16	\$57,081.57
10		\$49,932.00	\$54,335.13	\$57,937.79

**These amounts do not include the additional cost increase for certain fringe benefits (Retirement, FICA, and Worker's Compensation).*

Table 6, below represents the proposed baseline salary for DSS frontline supervisors. It is proposed that supervisors will earn a salary 10% higher than the proposed baseline salary. Currently, the average DSS supervisor earns approximately \$40,709 per year, regardless of degree type or years' experience.

Table 6: Proposed Salary for DSS Supervisors

Supervisor Enhancement (10%)				
Years Experience	Training	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0	\$44,000.00	\$50,600.00		
1		\$50,853.00	\$52,124.33	
2		\$51,107.27	\$52,645.57	\$53,961.71
3		\$51,362.80	\$53,172.02	\$54,771.13
4		\$51,619.62	\$53,703.74	\$55,592.70
5		\$51,877.71	\$54,240.78	\$56,426.59
6		\$52,137.10	\$54,783.19	\$57,272.99
7		\$52,397.79	\$55,331.02	\$58,132.08
8		\$52,659.78	\$55,884.33	\$59,004.07
9		\$52,923.08	\$56,443.17	\$59,889.13
10		\$53,187.69	\$57,007.61	\$60,760.00

**These amounts do not include the additional cost increase for certain fringe benefits (Retirement, FICA, and Worker's Compensation).*

Agency Cost Impact

The table on the following page illustrates the estimated fiscal impact of the salary plan on the agency's Five-Year Comprehensive Budget submitted to the Court in May of 2018. The amounts shown below are updated projections of staff costs (including salary, fringe, and operating costs, as applicable) associated with current caseworkers and supervisors under the new salary plan, costs associated with current unfilled positions being filled in future years under the new salary plan, and additional positions the agency either has requested (for fiscal year 2019-20) or anticipates requesting in subsequent years being funded under the salary plan. As with all estimated costs captured in the original budget plan, these cost estimates are subject to being adjusted as the nature and extent of costs are further refined to reflect activities that will take place following the approval of implementation plans.

The table also contains important information as to the timing of agency budget requests, and the approximate dates of those requested appropriations being available to fund the implementation of the salary plan and hiring of additional caseworkers. The agency is currently working with the Governor's Office and the General Assembly to explore opportunities to expedite implementation of salary increases. Given that the agency's budget for next fiscal year (fiscal year 2019-2020) has already been captured in the Governor's Executive Budget, the agency cannot commit to an earlier timeframe until it is made aware that additional funding is available earlier than July 2020.

7/1/18-6/30/19	Original 5 Yr. Plan	Updated with Salary Plan 1/2019	Earliest Date Agency May Request Funding	Earliest Date of Potential Fund Availability
Staff	\$ 16,934,820	\$ 16,934,819	Sep-17	Jul-18
Actual new funds received for Michelle H. Staffing for the current fiscal year, which were requested in Fall 2017, and were made available <u>July of 2018</u> for agency use.				
7/1/19-6/30/20	Original 5 Yr. Plan	Updated with Salary Plan 1/2019	Earliest Date Agency May Request Funding	Earliest Date of Potential Fund Availability
Staff	\$ 21,005,993	\$ 21,005,992	Sep-18	Jul-19
Funds requested in Fall 2018 for Michelle H. staffing for the fiscal year beginning July 2019 which were included in the Governor's 2019-2020 Executive Budget issued January 15, 2019. This request is subject to legislative approval and, if approved, the additional funding would be available <u>July of 2019</u> for agency use.				
7/1/20-6/30/21	Original 5 Yr. Plan	Updated with Salary Plan 1/2019	Earliest Date Agency May Request Funding	Earliest Date of Potential Fund Availability
Staff	\$ 12,800,201	\$ 46,462,336	Sep-19	Jul-20
Estimated additional staff funding for Michelle H. to be requested in the Fall of 2019, including the amounts necessary to fully-implement the new caseworker salary plan for all existing positions, and all vacant/new positions expected to be allocated to the agency. Implementation of the salary plan uses the current proportion of staff with BSW and MSW using the assumption of which level current staff would fall into given their years' experience and education. Also assumes an additional 1% mandatory employer retirement contribution increase. These funds, if approved by the Governor's office and Legislature, would be available <u>July of 2020</u> for agency use.				
7/1/21-6/30/22	Original 5 Yr. Plan	Updated with Salary Plan 1/2019	Earliest Date Agency May Request Funding	Earliest Date of Potential Fund Availability
Staff	\$ 12,675,483	\$ 14,986,253	Sep-20	Jul-21
Estimated additional staff funding for Michelle H. to be requested in the Fall of 2020, incorporating the new caseworker salary plan for all new positions expected to be requested and allocated to the agency. Assumes a 2.5% increase for all staff to increase from level 1 to level 2 within the first year. Also assumes an additional 1% mandatory employer retirement contribution increase. These funds, if approved by the Governor's office and Legislature, would be available <u>July of 2021</u> for agency use.				
7/1/22-6/30/23	Original 5 Yr. Plan	Updated with Salary Plan 1/2019	Earliest Date Agency May Request Funding	Earliest Date of Potential Fund Availability
Staff	\$ 16,579,231	\$ 14,266,772	Sep-21	Jul-22
Estimated additional staff funding for Michelle H. to be requested in the Fall of 2021, including the amounts necessary to fully-implement the new caseworker salary plan for all new positions expected to be requested and allocated to the agency. Assumes an additional 2.5% increase for all staff to increase from level 2 to level 3 within the second year. These funds, if approved by the Governor's office and Legislature, would be available <u>July of 2022</u> for agency use.				