



APPENDIX

# HEALTHY ORGANIZATIONS

## How do some **child protection agencies approach coaching?**

The following jurisdictional snapshots spotlight 12 different state, county, and national models and approaches to coaching child protection agency staff. For the companion jurisdictional scan on this topic, please see: [How do some child protection agencies approach coaching?](#)

### **Alabama: Title IV-E Stipend Program<sup>1</sup>**

#### **When did coaching start and who receives coaching?**

In the spring semester of 2019, the University of Alabama's Title IV-E Stipend Program launched a new program to offer coaching to Title IV-E stipend students. The first cohort included 15 students, 13 of whom graduated and are now working in the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) Office of Child Protective Services. Each semester, a new cohort of Title IV-E stipend students are offered a chance to participate in coaching, which begins while they are in their field placement and continues for 18 months after graduation so that each student receives approximately two years of coaching.

#### **What is the coaching model?**

The Alabama Title IV-E Stipend Program uses a [developmental coaching](#) model. In contrast to performance coaching, where the coach teaches a specific technique or skill, the primary focus of developmental coaching is on an individual and what



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that person brings into the work environment. The coach helps the staff person with topics such as negotiating skills, self-care techniques, confidence, and communication. The relationship between the coach and the staff member being trained is foundational in this model, as the coach helps individuals discover how their values impact their work and supports them to use their values in vision- and goal-setting. The coach provides ongoing support and holds individuals accountable to their goals and what they want to accomplish.

Coaches do not provide input or guidance on specific case practice. If the staff member is experiencing self-doubt because of a difficult event, the coaching session will focus on processing the trauma, recognizing the issues, and working to move on so that the staff person can provide great service to the next family. The coaching session does not focus on what mistakes were made in the assessment or what opportunities were missed, as the expectation is that staff will go to their supervisor for guidance on casework.

Coaches are required to provide students with two hours of coaching each month. While it is recommended that the students complete two one-hour sessions each month, the model is flexible to allow for two-hour sessions if it better suits the student's needs. Coaching sessions are completed face-to-face, or through video or teleconferencing.

## **Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?**

Coaching is a supplementary role for all the coaches in this program. Most are retired child welfare caseworkers or supervisors, while others are still employed full-time elsewhere. The coaches do not have a set caseload, although most coach two or three people at any given time.

Certified coaches at the Butler Institute for Families train the coaches. The curriculum is practice-based, with 70% to 80% focused on role-playing and providing peers with feedback. This practice experience helps participants to hone their skills as a coach and experience being coached by others. After training,

coaches participate in quarterly learning circles via Zoom. These circles were initially facilitated by the trainers from the Butler Institute for Families but have transitioned into a peer support/learning group.

Training includes:

- Module One: Face-to-face training for two eight-hour days.
- Module Two: Face-to-face training for three eight-hour days. Held one month after Module One.
- Six months providing a student with coaching while participating in:
  - \* Three one-hour coaching sessions where the new coach is coached by one of Butler's trainers.
  - \* Monthly one-hour conference calls with Butler coaches to receive feedback.
- Module Three: Face-to-face training for two eight-hour days.

## **How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?**

Data is being collected for a program evaluation that will compare outcomes for the students who are coached to other social work graduates employed by DHR. The evaluation will assess job preparation, job satisfaction, intent to stay, retention, and the benefits of coaching. Initial results should be available in 2021.

## **How is the coaching program funded?**

This coaching program is fully funded through Title IV-E.

## **California: Academy for Professional Excellence<sup>2</sup>**

### **When did coaching start and who receives coaching?**

The Academy for Professional Excellence (also known as the Southern Training Academy) began coaching in 2013 as a result of a need for coaching supports for counties in connection with Safety Organized Practice (SOP). When the Academy began coaching, some of the counties it served already were using coaching as a

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performance management tool. Staff from the Academy worked closely with county directors and managers to change the perception of coaching so that it was seen as a support and part of a culture of learning rather than a punishment.

Coaching currently is offered for support staff, caseworkers, supervisors, and leadership. The type of coaching provided to a county is determined by an annual needs assessment that examines all aspects of training and staff development. The county and the Academy then work together to develop a contract that includes who will receive coaching, what topics they will be coached on, and how much coaching time is needed.

## What is the coaching model?

The Academy for Professional Excellence uses a skills-based coaching model that provides coaching on the job to support implementation of training knowledge and skills. In this model, the coach and staff person are a team working together to enhance the staff person's skills or personal development. For each session, the staff person determines the skill or goal to be explored during the session and then the coach and staff person walk through a standard set of steps including identifying initial interest, establishing goals, observation and demonstration, self-reflection, feedback, evaluation, and action planning. Coaching sessions are not seen as a stand-alone learning opportunity, but as part of a larger professional development plan.

Coaching is also in the fabric of all conversations between Academy staff and county leadership. Academy staff coach leadership while providing technical assistance and during all workforce development conversations. Communication about the coaching model and demonstrating its benefits for staff and leadership are an important part of the model.

## Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

Coaches are employed as both trainers and coaches, which allows them to connect the training curriculum to coaching opportunities. There is one coach who is a leadership coach and the others provide coaching to caseworkers and supervisors.

All new coaches attend a coaching fundamentals training to ensure a baseline understanding of the Academy's coaching model. A needs assessment is completed for each new coach to evaluate that person's child welfare practice knowledge and coaching skills. Training is then individualized to meet the new coach's needs but generally includes shadowing other coaches' individual and group coaching sessions, practicing coaching, and completing process recordings of coaching sessions. All coaches participate in individual and group supervision, and attend weekly huddles with the coaching team.

## How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

The Academy for Professional Excellence uses Qualtrics to collect data from coaches and those being trained. Each coach has a data dashboard to keep track of coaching deliverables and view feedback in real time. County directors receive monthly coaching reports so that they know how coaching is utilized and how it impacts their workforce. Data includes satisfaction with the coaching experience, as well as number of coaching hours, learning objectives, and skill growth.

Coaching satisfaction scores are high, showing that staff who have been coached feel supported and stay in their jobs longer. However, it is hard to correlate the data with which services are being provided (training, simulations, or coaching). Staff also state that coaching helps them feel more competent and confident.

## How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching is funded through county contracts.

## How has coaching delivery changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Coaching staff had a smooth transition to a virtual environment because all coaches were already remote staff, working out of home offices and using Zoom to connect with one another. Maintaining strong communication with the counties is important so they understand coaching is still available and can identify new opportunities for coaching and training.

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## California: Bay Area Academy<sup>3</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

When coaching was first offered through the Bay Area Academy eight or nine years ago, it was primarily for supervisors. Over time, the team recognized that coaching for managers and frontline staff was also needed to effectively change practice and ensure a common language across the organization. As a result, coaching for these groups was added in 2020. The Academy provides coaching in a variety of formats, including individual and group coaching.

Academy coaches also train supervisors and managers to coach their staff. The Academy provides a three-day “Art of Coaching” course as part of core training for supervisors, and a one-day training for managers.

### What is the coaching model?

The Bay Area Academy uses a person-centered and skills-based coaching approach. Coaches support individuals in exploring where biases, assumptions, resistance, and expectations impact their work with families or colleagues. Coaching is viewed as a valuable tool for building the capacity of the workforce to help improve skills, transfer learning into practice, and enhance performance.

The goal is to integrate coaching into all areas of practice through five comprehensive services:

1. **Individual coaching** is performed to support an individual’s professional and personal growth and development.
2. **Group coaching** is theme-based coaching to a group to support deeper content and/or process expertise and development.
3. **Field-based coaching** improves the transfer of learning from classroom to on-the-job application, and provides opportunities for in-the-moment professional growth and development.
4. **Skills-based coaching** focuses on improving a skill or a set of skills, like Structured Decision Making and Safety Organized Practice. The coach

is primarily focused on the task, tool, or skill (the “doing” instead of the “being”.) The coach supports the individual in becoming proficient in the practice, tools, or concepts through observation and providing immediate feedback.

5. **Integrated approach to coaching** supports individuals in building capacity in themselves and their practice skills. Coaches focus on both the “being” and the “doing” of coaching.

Counties are offered the full range of services and work with the Academy team to develop a contract for coaching that includes the services that meet their unique needs.

### Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

Some of the trainers are certified coaches while others are in the process of becoming certified. All coaches attend the Art of Coaching training and then are observed coaching and teaching the training. Most coaches are hired because of their extensive training background.

### How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

There is no robust evaluation of the coaching program. Coaches use rubrics with staff to evaluate progress, but this data is not analyzed in aggregate. In feedback sessions, supervisors say that they feel supported in their role and there is anecdotal evidence that coaching has resulted in the retention of supervisors.

### How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching is funded through county contracts.

### How has coaching delivery changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Bay Area Academy is in the process of moving the coaching curriculum from in-person to an online format. Coaching is occurring both via videoconference and telephone, based on the comfort level of the staff person. It is not clear if remote coaching will continue after the pandemic passes. Anecdotally, however,



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remote coaching appears to be more successful than anticipated.

## California: Central California Training Academy<sup>4</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

The Central California Training Academy first began using coaching in connection with practice model implementation in 2012. An implementation support team provides coaching at two levels: (1) system-level to county-level leadership; and (2) skills-based for frontline caseworkers and their supervisors.

### What is the coaching model?

All coaching provided through the Central California Training Academy is delivered in the context of implementation and starts with leadership. For a county to receive coaching supports, there must be something that leadership is coaching “to” (such as the Core Practice Model, Safety Organized Practice, or other practices). Managers, directors, and their teams receive coaching on adaptive leadership, building and engaging partnerships, using data, and implementation of change. Social workers and supervisors receive skills-based coaching connected to Safety Organized Practice, the Core Practice Model, and transfer of learning from core training.

The coaching model dictates that each coaching session has four elements: (1) engagement and goal setting; (2) model and demonstration; (3) feedback; and (4) next steps. The staff will have both a goal for the session and an ongoing goal that they are striving to achieve.

### Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

The Academy has a team of eight to 10 coaches who are members of the implementation support team. Training for the coaches is provided through a partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. There are no set coach-to-staff person ratios for field-based coaches.

### How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

The coaching program has not been evaluated as a standalone program. It is viewed through the lens of implementation science, which includes coaching as an [essential driver](#) for successful implementation of new practices. Feedback collected on individual coaching sessions indicates that coaching is highly valued, but there is no data that can connect coaching to case practice outcomes or staff retention.

### How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching is funded through the Child & Family Policy Institute of California, county contracts, and the Academy's master contract.

### How has coaching delivery changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Remote coaching is provided to staff working virtually, and the team is becoming proficient in Zoom.

## California: Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services<sup>5</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

Coaching was first used 10 years ago in Los Angeles County in connection to the implementation of the Core Practice Model, and it has evolved over time. Since 2017, coaching has become more structured and consistent.

Coaching is offered to all caseworkers and supervisors. The coaching team aims for at least 70% of each office to receive coaching. To achieve this goal, coaching staff reach out to supervisors and social workers daily to identify needs and provide extra help on a specific skill or whether a unit needs training or coaching connected to the practice behaviors.

### What is the coaching model?

Los Angeles County does not use an identified coaching model. The county has adopted a certification process to assist staff in facilitating quality meetings with families, and coaches provide skills-based

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coaching on areas such as how to engage families through teaming and assessing, in connection with the 23 Core Practice Model practice behaviors. In the past, coaching looked different in every office, but now annual themes are identified and each office receives the same coaching and training opportunities. Coaching includes a process of observation, demonstration, and feedback.

Supervisors also are expected to be coaches and to support their caseworkers through certification. Coach developers help supervisors become certified to coach their staff.

## **Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?**

There are 13 coach developers who work through the main county agency office, and each local office also has one or two of their own. Coaches learn through in-class training, on-the-job experience, and self-training. Coach developers attended a three-day coaching academy through the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. They also participate in monthly roundtables for peer support and professional development. A coaching module was recently added to supervisory core training, which reinforces the idea of coaching as part of a supervisor's responsibilities.

## **How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?**

There is no formal evaluation of the coaching program. There is an evaluation of practice outcomes, but they are not connected to participation in coaching.

## **How is the coaching program funded?**

The coaching program is funded through the county budget.

## **How has coaching delivery changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Coaches have experienced some challenges with virtual platforms. While the staff and coaches have compatible videoconferencing platforms, families do not have the same access to technology, which makes it difficult for coaches to observe caseworkers practicing their

skills and then provide feedback. Virtual skills-based coaching is still taking place between coaches and staff to support caseworkers' professional development.

## **California: Northern California Training Academy<sup>6</sup>**

### **When did coaching start and who receives coaching?**

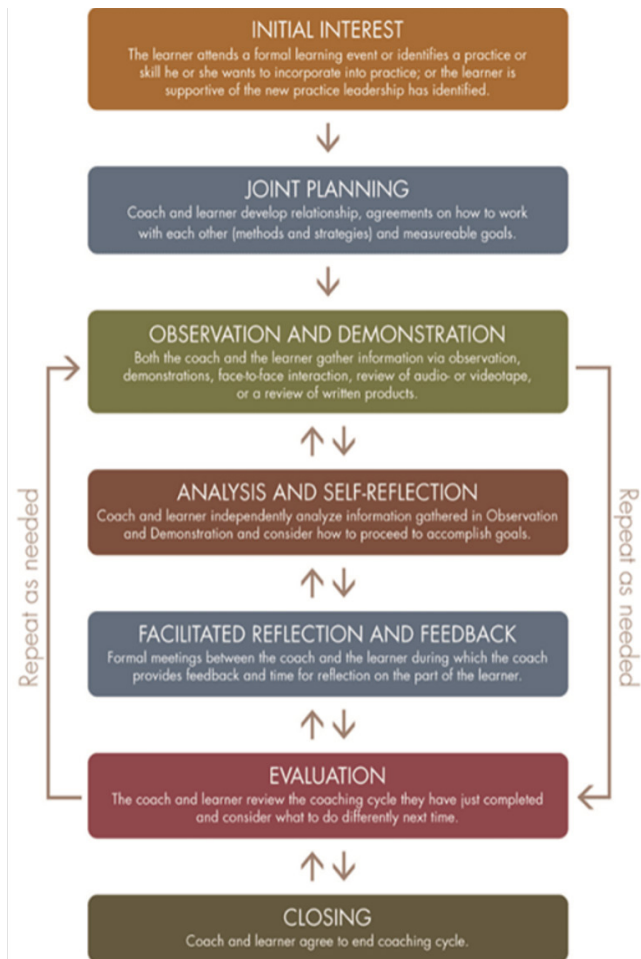
When the Northern California Training Academy began offering coaching to child protection agencies in 2008, it was the first academy in California to do so. At the time, there was no research on coaching in child protection. After a review of coaching models and strategies, the Northern California Training Academy selected a skills-based model, which has evidence showing success in helping practitioners learn new skills. Skills-based coaching is most typically used in K-12 educational settings, parent coaching models, and other models that have fidelity as a goal (for example, Motivational Interviewing).

Coaching is provided to both caseworkers and supervisors in the form of individual and group coaching. Individual coaching is offered to supervisors enrolled in training programs (Supervisor Core Training and Tools for Supervisory Excellence) and consists of four to six one-on-one monthly coaching sessions. Program managers and directors connected to leadership training programs also are offered individual coaching, while group coaching is most often used for implementing Safety Organized Practice. Coaches are assigned to a county and will provide group sessions for a mixture of new and experienced workers. In addition to coaching, Academy coaches also provide a coaching training instituted to build supervisor, manager, and director coaching capacity so they can use coaching skills with their teams. They also provide coaching training to county leaders throughout the year to help them build a coaching culture in their organizations.

### **What is the coaching model?**

The skills-based coaching model is a seven-step process that includes a cycle of observations and demonstrations. The seven steps are: (1) initial interest;

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(2) joint planning; (3) observation and demonstration; (4) analysis and self-reflection; (5) facilitated reflection and feedback; (6) evaluation; and (7) closing. Steps 3 to 6 can be repeated as many times as needed and some of the steps may occur simultaneously. Observation and demonstration allow for staff to perform the skills they are trying to learn and integrate, and for the coach to provide feedback for them to reflect on.

## Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

The five coaches who make up the team are not full-time employees, although they are used regularly for coaching. Academy leaders are also trained coaches.

A few of the coaches are skilled leadership coaches and they provide the Tools for Excellence training to managers and directors every two years, and to supervisors during the alternate years. There is no set caseload for coaches, but coaches typically are responsible for up to 10 individuals and four counties.

## How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

Academy staff complete an annual retrospective with the counties to collect information from executive-level managers on how coaching has impacted practice and how things would be different if their county had not received coaching. Surveys also are given to coaches and staff, but the return rate is low.

Over the last year, focus groups and interviews were completed as part of a coaching evaluation supported by Casey Family Programs. This evaluation found that the counties that were new to coaching (less than two years) had enthusiastic and positive feedback on their coaching experience, but satisfaction decreased after two years. Analysis shows that the counties felt more supported during the initial coaching phases but when coaching became an ongoing service, it no longer was recognized as special.

Evidence indicates that counties with Safety Organized Practice (SOP) coaching have implemented SOP more robustly than those that did not utilize coaching. For example, the counties that implemented SOP without coaching are not teaming with clients and are less focused on engagement.

There is no current data connecting coaching to retention of caseworkers. An evaluation of the first coaching program, Tools for Supervisory Excellence, in 2009 and 2010 showed that staff who were coached stayed with the agency longer and were more likely to be promoted.

## How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching is funded through county contracts and the master Academy contract with the California Department of Social Services.

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## Colorado: Arapahoe County Department of Human Services<sup>7</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

In 2013, Arapahoe County was one of the first counties in Colorado to develop a coaching program. Coaching is offered to new caseworkers and begins while they are in their initial 12-week certification training. New caseworkers are not required to accept coaching and there is no prescribed length of time for the coaching relationship. The number of coaching hours also varies and is driven by the staff person. On average, new caseworkers spend between five and 10 hours with their coach in the field. Experienced caseworkers also are eligible for coaching and may need only one or two hours with a coach to work on a specific identified skill or goal. Group coaching and practice labs also are provided to address the technical needs of staff, such as paperwork completion.

Supervisors receive coaching from the training and professional development coaching supervisor, who is a peer. This coaching relationship helps build support for coaching from supervisors, and increases understanding of how the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and coaches differ.

### What is the coaching model?

When it began, the coaching program in Arapahoe County was based on the [Coaching Tool Kit](#) from the University of California, Davis. More recently, coaches have completed the [Kempe Center's Coaches College](#), which is based on the [Co-Active](#) coaching model. As there are limited coaching models specific to child protection, Arapahoe County's coaching program has adopted a diverse approach, pulling from these and other sources to meet staff and county needs. There is no official county model.

Coaching is connected directly to new caseworker training. All new caseworkers meet with the training and professional development coaching supervisor, who matches them with a coach. Matching is based on coaches' workloads as well as strengths and needs of the coach and caseworker. The coach

and the new caseworker will meet to talk about the program, understand the benefits, and lay the groundwork for a coaching relationship. After a few weeks, the caseworker and coach complete a coaching readiness assessment tool, which helps them decide if the caseworker needs a coach and what their goals will be. Caseworkers complete practice simulations with their coaches, and their goals for coaching are tied to the skills that they want to improve, based on the training curriculum. The coaches know what is being taught in the training and what it should look like in practice. Coaches use a professional development tool that complements the practice model.

New caseworkers also are matched with a learning leader mentor who works within their area (but on a different team) and is available to provide day-to-day support. The new caseworkers shadow their mentor to learn how to apply specific practices on a daily basis. The coach, mentor, and supervisor form a "wraparound" team so that the new caseworker can feel fully supported.

### Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

Arapahoe County initially had a staff of two full-time practice coaches, which has evolved into a staff of four full-time professional development coaches. Coaches are categorized as "Caseworker C," which is the highest level of caseworker. They do not carry cases, but the positions require experience in child welfare case management. Coaches are not specialized and provide coaching for both intake and ongoing caseworkers. Each coach has a caseload of 16 to 20 caseworkers. The ideal ratio is 12 to 15 staff members per coach.

New coaches are hired based on their expertise and skill set. They spend time shadowing their peers to learn the process. They also attend the Coaches College and read the Co-Active coaching book. Coaches receive supervision every other week to support their ongoing professional development.



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## How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

In 2018, Arapahoe County completed an evaluation of its program by surveying all new staff and all supervisors who had staff receiving coaching. The survey was used to identify gaps in learning and to bring the team together to identify next steps. Among caseworkers, 70% said that coaching supported them in retention. In addition, every staff person completes an evaluation when exiting coaching. The responses show that caseworkers appreciate coaching and find it helpful in preparing them for their work.

## How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching positions are fully funded by Arapahoe County's internal budget.

## Colorado: Child Welfare Training System at The Kempe Center<sup>8</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

Colorado began utilizing coaching as a strategy in 2013. While some counties provide coaching to caseworkers, this statewide program focuses its one-on-one and systems coaching on leaders within child welfare. While no one is prevented from participating in coaching because of role or title, the Child Welfare Training System takes this approach because of the great impact that leaders can have on caseworkers' individual experiences, team dynamics, and overall organizational functioning. Systems coaching also is provided to teams and organizations to work on topics such as building cohesion, increasing trust, and becoming more courageous in examining issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion. All coaching through the Child Welfare Training System is voluntary.

### What is the coaching model?

Colorado initially structured its coaching program using the [University of California, Davis](#) model and then evolved to the Co-Active model. In the [Co-Active](#) model, coaches focus on the person as a whole, rather than zeroing in only on their specific challenge. Coaches are not in a training role, so they refrain from offering

advice or providing direction. The Child Welfare Training System, through use of the Co-Active model, is working toward transformation in individuals and systems.

As such, the program is not about the coach having answers for the individual being coached. Instead, a core principle of the model is that staff are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. The individual being coached creates and designs the focus for coaching, and the coach and staff person together co-create how the work they will do jointly will best support the staff person. This model of coaching allows for individuals and teams to find the balance between being and doing. It allows them more space for being, so that they can be thoughtful about how they are doing the work. The mode for coaching is determined based on a number of factors and includes face-to-face, phone, or Zoom options.

### Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

Coaches must have previous child welfare experience and a solid understanding of leadership principles and dynamics. Efforts are made to assign coaches to counties outside of where they previously worked. Most coaches also have roles, separate from coaching, that include training and curriculum development. The maximum caseload of those for whom coaching is their only responsibility is 10 individuals and two or three teams. Those with mixed responsibilities have a maximum of four individuals and two teams.

The Co-Active Institute trains all coaches, and anyone who provides systems coaching must also complete the Organization and Relationship Systems Coaching program through CRR Global. In addition, there are three certified Dare to Lead™ facilitators on the Child Welfare Training System team. They have joined approximately 30 coaches from various Colorado counties to take part in a coaching collaborative that meets monthly, both in-person and virtually, for skill building, consultation, and support.

### How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

The program was recently evaluated by the University of Colorado Evaluation Center using a grounded theory

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approach, which found that all 19 study participants felt positive about their coaching experiences, reporting increased confidence, new perspectives and behaviors, and improved skills related to teamwork, leadership, and decision-making. Leadership at The Kempe Center felt that participants' responses aligned with program goals in multiple areas. Findings from the evaluation will be used to shape continuous quality improvement to ensure that the program continues to meet its intended outcomes.

## How is the coaching program funded?

The coaching program is funded through a state training grant for which The Kempe Center is the central management organization.

## Colorado: Jefferson County Human Services<sup>9</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

While coaching in Jefferson County initially began in 2013, it ended a few years later due to staffing changes. A coaching program restarted in 2018, and continues today. Coaches are available to new staff for their first year, but there is no set duration for the coaching relationship, and the length of time is determined by the needs of the staff person being coached. At first, coaching was mandated for new caseworkers, but this proved to be ineffective. Now coaches meet with every new caseworker after certification to see if they have goals that they would like to address. The coaches are skilled in eliciting coaching opportunities and goals from caseworkers, and most do accept the opportunity to participate. The idea of coaching is revisited later with those who pass on the initial outreach. Experienced staff can also access coaching to support their professional development goals (such as preparing for promotional opportunities).

### What is the coaching model?

Coaching is entirely caseworker-driven. [Co-Active](#) provides the foundation for coaching in Jefferson County, but is seen as more of an approach than a model since it was not written specifically for a government child protection agency.

### Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

The Jefferson County coaching program has two practice coaches: one who coaches permanency caseworkers and one who coaches intake caseworkers. Coaching is a full-time position, equal to a lead caseworker. Coaches must have experience as a caseworker and only internal staff are eligible to apply for this position.

While Jefferson's coaching programs are entirely county-driven, with no formal state oversight, the state provides training on Co-Active coaching through the [Kempe Center's Coaches College](#). This includes three days of in-person training and six to eight weeks of meetings with other coaches for peer practice coaching via Zoom. The final step prior to certification is a simulated coaching session via Zoom where the new coach receives feedback from state training staff.

Ongoing professional development for the coaches at the county level includes coaching from their supervisor and providing peer support. The coaches receive weekly supervision that alternates between individual and group supervision. Coaches also participate in a statewide collaborative, which provides a quarterly forum for county coaches from across the state to participate in group supervision and consultation.

There is no set coach-to-staff person ratio in Jefferson County, and workloads are adjusted based on the needs of the coaches and the caseworkers. Workload depends on turnover and hiring rates. A caseload standard for coaches has not been established.

### How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

The coaching program has been in place for less than two years so there is very little data to demonstrate outcomes. Caseworkers receive a survey after six months of coaching and at the end of their coaching experience. Preliminary data from these surveys shows that caseworkers enjoy being coached and are learning from their coaches, and that they appreciate the experience and want the program to continue.

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## How is the coaching program funded?

Coaches are county staff and their salaries come from the same funding stream as other caseworkers.

## Ohio: Child Welfare Training Program<sup>10</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

Coaching for caseworkers and supervisors in Ohio began in 2010, and coaching for executive directors and resource families began a few years later. Coaching is offered to caseworkers, supervisors, resource families, executive directors, and administrators to help develop priority skills identified during state, county, and individual needs assessments. It is not mandatory and is never used as part of a progressive discipline plan. Ohio's Regional Training Center assesses requests for coaching to determine the best way to meet the need. There are some instances when training would be more effective than coaching, or when the request is not appropriate for coaching. Once the focus of coaching is identified, the individual is matched with a coach who is certified in the requested skill set.

### What is the coaching model?

Coaching of staff and resource families is skills-based, time-limited, and connected directly to Ohio's [Universe of Child Welfare Competencies](#). The coaching model is strengths-based. Coaches develop a coaching plan with the individual and that person's supervisor. The plan includes:

- Focus of the coaching (skill areas and competencies).
- Desired practice behaviors for the individual and the supervisor in supporting the individual during coaching.
- Action steps for achieving desired skills or competencies.

The individual and supervisor assign a rating that best describes the current behavior. When coaching is complete, they return to this rating and provide an "after" rating for each behavior to determine progress and determine next steps.

Coaching for staff can include skills such as engaging families, conducting home visits, working with relatives and extended families, the use of Ohio's structured assessment and decision-support model, case planning, and case documentation. Coaching for caregivers includes skills such as caring for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome, managing behaviors related to trauma, and working with parents. Executive coaching is provided through a partnership with the Public Children's Services Association of Ohio, where directors and administrators receive coaching on skills including fiscal management, visioning, strategic planning, and leadership.

### Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

The Ohio Child Welfare Training Center already had a system of independent contractors in place for all training, which was expanded in 2010 to include coaches. All trainers and coaches go through a foundational trainer certification and approval process. An individual can choose to be a trainer, a coach, or both. Coaches generally come to the position with experience in child protection practice or mental health. All coaches attend a training for coaches that focuses on roles and responsibilities along with addressing and practicing key coaching skills. There is no set coach-to-staff person ratio. Most coaches have other employment, so they are not able to coach more than four people at any one time.

### How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

Coaching is assessed at multiple points in the process. Check-in evaluations are completed when coaching is in progress. After coaching concludes, both the individual and supervisor receive evaluation surveys. This survey data is used to assess individual progress. However, due to the lack of automation, data is not aggregated to evaluate overall program effectiveness. Testimonials from participants express the value of the experience but there is no evidence that coaching is tied to retention. The impact of resource family coaching is most evident when the placement is maintained and the child is not moved to a new family.

# How do some child protection agencies approach coaching?

## How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching is funded primarily through Title IV-E training dollars. The state contract includes a mix of funds including Title XX, Title IV-B, and CAPTA.

## Pennsylvania: Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families<sup>11</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

Coaching in Allegheny County was first introduced in 2013, simultaneous to the county implementing a new practice model. Coaches were subject matter experts in the practice model and they worked with all supervisors and caseworkers to help them learn the model and apply the principles in their case practice. Once practice model implementation was complete, coaching became a service offered to newly hired caseworkers, who are mandated to work with a coach to learn the practice model.

The majority of coaching is done in the field, with only 25% occurring in the office. Coaches model practice behaviors with families while the staff person observes, and then they explain what they did, how they did it, and why. These conversations help the new caseworkers connect what they are learning in the classroom to their work in the field. As the new caseworkers' comfort with practice behaviors increases, they take on more of the practice, while the coach observes and provides performance feedback. There is not a mandated timeline for coaching of new caseworkers, but most new caseworkers reach proficiency at five months to one year after starting coaching. Coaches also are available to any other caseworkers or supervisors who are interested in receiving this service.

### What is the coaching model?

Coaching in Allegheny County is a combination of models including [GROW](#) (Goals, Reality, Options, and Will), [OSCAR](#) (Outcome, Situation, Choices, Actions, and Review), and [CLEAR](#) (Contract, Listen, Explore, Action, and Review). When coaching was initiated in 2013, it was viewed as process-oriented with peer coaches serving as subject matter experts who

partnered with staff for the purpose of transferring their expertise. The coaching program has evolved to include aspects of [Intentional Change Theory](#) as a way to help coaches focus on the holistic personal and professional development of the individual being coached. Coaching is now an opportunity to support the workforce in a way that is driven by the individual, which is more meaningful than if it was driven by the agency.

Core components of the coaching model:

- **Contractual:** Coaches make a contract with everyone that they coach. This working agreement sets the foundation for the coaching relationship and allows for the setting of expectations and clarification of roles for both the coach and staff person. The process of contracting helps to unearth what kind of learner the staff person is, and determine how feedback will be given and received. The contract also includes information about what the staff person wants to get out of coaching and what will make it worthwhile.
- **Reflective:** Coaching provides time for thoughtful reflection. All feedback is rooted in the recognition that learning happens not just in practicing a skill, but in reflecting on the action. In a coaching session, staff can reflect on what was easy, what was hard, when they felt confident, and when they did not feel confident. The staff person identifies what worked well while also leveraging and recognizing what was tricky and what could be done differently next time.
- **Strengths-based:** Coaches are trained to be observant and astute to the individual's obvious strengths, as well as those under the surface. They help staff identify what they are doing well, which often is not obvious to them.
- **Solution-focused:** Solution-focused coaching is parallel to solution-focused practice with families. Coaches use questions to help staff think about a similar situation when they experienced a positive outcome. Staff are then asked to name and identify what contributed to that favorable outcome.
- **Curious:** Coaches possess an authentic curiosity about the person in front of them. Coaches are trained to develop thoughtful questions to keep the



# How do some child protection agencies approach coaching?

coaching conversation moving in an effort to get to root causes.

- **Person-centered:** Coaches table their own agenda and focus on the needs of the individual being coached. The coaching interaction is all about what the staff person needs, and not about the coach or the agency's needs.

## Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

Coaches are promoted from frontline positions. The current program supports eight coaches who are responsible for staff in five regional offices. There is no set coach-to-staff person ratio. One or two coaches are assigned to each regional office and coaching assignments are made on a rotational basis. New coaches are provided with information about the core components of the coaching model and receive coaching in their role from the unit manager.

## How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

The coaching program has not been evaluated, but the program manager is in the early stages of creating a coaching data dashboard that will include information about the topics that coaches are requesting, levels of caseworker satisfaction with their coaching experience, and retention data.

## How is the coaching program funded?

The coaching program was initially funded through a state block grant that also supported the implementation of the new practice model. It is unclear where the current funding comes from, but it appears to be the same funding source as other casework and supervisory positions.

## Pennsylvania: Philadelphia Department of Human Services<sup>12</sup>

### When did coaching start and who receives coaching?

Coaching in Philadelphia began in 2013 when the Department of Human Services initiated [Improving](#)

[Outcomes for Children](#), a model for delivering child welfare, juvenile justice, and child abuse prevention services. This model required that caseworkers at community umbrella agencies (CUAs) take on new case management responsibilities (such as writing case plans, safety assessments, and risk assessments). Coaches are considered subject matter experts and provide training and technical assistance at the CUAs.

New CUA caseworkers receive the Pennsylvania state training and certification through the Philadelphia Department of Human Services University. Coaching is provided as a supplement to the training to help new caseworkers apply what they learn in training to their practice in the field. Coaching is available while they are in training or can begin after training is completed, depending on the skills and needs of the new caseworker. Coaches also provide information sessions and formal group training sessions, as needed. The topics for these sessions are elicited from quarterly case record reviews and requests from supervisors and caseworkers.

### What is the coaching model?

There is no defined model of coaching. Coaches have responsibilities that range from providing formal training and information sessions to one-on-one consultations, teaming meetings, and case reviews.

## Who is in the role of coach, what is the caseload, and how are the coaches trained?

Coaches are employees of Philadelphia's Department of Human Services University (formerly Staff Development), and they provide services at the six contracted CUAs. Each CUA has between 45 and 55 caseworkers, and one coach and one supervisor (for the coach) is located at each CUA. The coach's supervisor is available to provide coaching to the supervisors at the CUA while the coach provides coaching to caseworkers. There is no set coach-to-staff person ratio, but two practice coaches for each CUA was expressed as the preferred staffing ratio.

Practice coaches receive instructor competency training from the [Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center](#), where they receive foundational training in

# How do some child protection agencies approach coaching?

how to be a trainer and a coach. The training covers topics such as: facilitation and consultant skills; organizational development; emotional intelligence; project management; and curriculum building. After training, coaches shadow other coaches in each of the CUAs so that they can understand the unique culture of each agency.

## How is the coaching program evaluated and what are the outcomes?

The coaching program is not being evaluated and data is not collected on how many new caseworkers are

coached or how much training the coaches provide. Data from [CUA Scorecards](#) show that practice has improved from the onset of coaching, but there is no information to directly connect coaching with these practice improvements.

## How is the coaching program funded?

Coaching is funded through the Philadelphia budget. It is possible that some of the activities are reimbursable through Title IV-E.

To learn more, visit [Questions from the field](#) at [Casey.org](#).

- 1 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Kristy Holt, Title IV-E Coordinator, and Melody Denton, IV-E Stipend Program Coordinator, University of Alabama, on March 13, 2020.
- 2 Information in this section was gathered from the Child Welfare Development Services Practice Consultant Program report and personal communication with Jennifer AhSing and Dawn Schoonhoven Scott, Academy for Professional Excellence, on May 19, 2020.
- 3 Information in this section was gathered from the Bay Area Academy Coaching Services Delivery Plan Outline and personal communication with Gloria King, trainer and coach, Bay Area Academy, on May 7, 2020.
- 4 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Andrea Sobrado, coach and consultant, Central California Training Academy, on May 7, 2020.
- 5 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Dorothy Byron-Arrington and Blanca Bonilla, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, on May 29, 2020.
- 6 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Nancy Hafer and Alison Book, Northern California Training Academy, on May 12, 2020.
- 7 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Stacia Schmied-Johnston, Training and Professional Development Coaching Supervisor, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, on February 24, 2020.
- 8 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Ashley Anderson, Coaching Manager, and Kasey Matz, Project Director, The Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect and Colorado Child Welfare Training System, on March 2, 2020.
- 9 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Elizabeth (Liz) Huffman, Practice Coach Supervisor, Jefferson County Human Services, on February 14, 2020.
- 10 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with staff at the Ohio Institute for Human Services, on March 5, 2020.
- 11 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Greg Phillips, Manager, Teaming Institute, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families, on January 29, 2020, and February 21, 2020.
- 12 Information in this section was gathered from personal communication with Robin Chapolini, Chief Learning Officer, Taheerah Long, Administrator for Training and Delivery, and Luciana Terrell, Director of Organization and Professional Development, Philadelphia Department of Human Services, on February 21, 2020.

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