

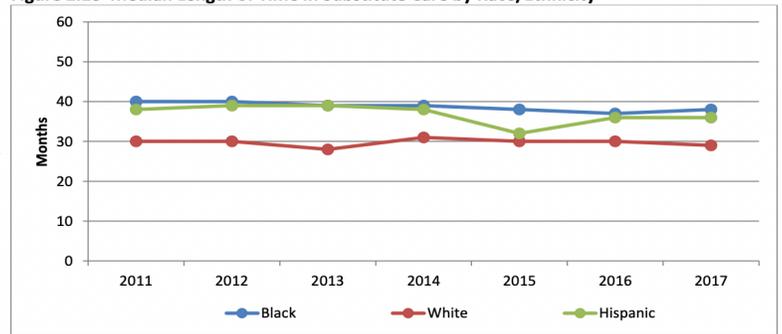


Program Background & Facts

The Illinois child welfare workforce bears the most vital and complicated responsibility of protecting and healing children and families that have suffered abuse or neglect so they can thrive. The goal of the health and human services sector is to empower individuals, groups, and communities to maximize their potential; child welfare staff are at the core of this system. To address inadequate staffing and the ever-growing labor shortage in child welfare, the eligibility criteria for various child welfare positions must be expanded.

- ⇒ **STAFF TURNOVER:** Community-based providers (CBP) have a 42%-50% annual staff turnover rate for caseworkers, supervisors, therapists, & residential care staff.
- ⇒ **INABILITY TO HIRE:** CBPs report being unable to hire or promote experienced, knowledgeable staff due to strict eligibility criteria that does not account for years of experience.
- ⇒ **POOR OUTCOMES:** Labor shortages and high rates of staff turnover often result in poor outcomes for youth in care, including increased lengths of stay. Black children are particularly impacted by this as they are three times more likely to languish in care.

Figure 2.28 Median Length of Time in Substitute Care by Race/Ethnicity



Source: [Conditions of Children in or at Risk of Foster Care in Illinois: FY2021 Monitoring Report of the B.H. Consent Decree](#)

Solution

The General Assembly should amend the degree requirements, credentials, and type of experience by expanding the eligibility criteria and list of acceptable degrees for child welfare staff positions that are currently described under DCFS Rules 401, 403, and 404.



CALL TO ACTION

Support **HB5044/SB3794** which would expand the list of eligible degrees, allowing individuals from a wider array of human services backgrounds with an interest in child welfare, to apply for and accept employment in Child Welfare Agencies, Child Care Institutions, and Group Homes.



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