

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

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NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES & ALBANY & RENSSELAER SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES MARK CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH WITH CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

'Caseworkers Make a Difference' Campaign Launched to Stem High Turnover Rate of Child Welfare Caseworkers

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq., and Albany County Executive Michael Breslin today were joined by the social services commissioners from Albany and Rensselaer counties to launch a yearlong statewide child welfare caseworker recruitment and retention campaign, "Caseworkers Make a Difference."

The turnover rate for child welfare caseworkers is 17 percent statewide, according to the OCFS Caseworker Staffing and Turnover Survey. In some counties, the turnover rate has been as high as 25 percent. In the Capital District, the 2007 turnover rates break down at 29 percent in Albany; 24 percent in Rensselaer; 21 percent in Schenectady; and 41 percent in Saratoga.

"Among the challenges we face daily in child welfare in New York State is the high turnover rate of caseworkers who defend against the abuse, neglect, and maltreatment of our most vulnerable children," said Commissioner Carrión. "Counties which have made concerted efforts to stem this turnover have been successful."

County Executive Breslin said: "Our caseworkers are the eyes and ears of the county's child welfare services system. This campaign will reinforce the message to each and every one of them how critical they are in improving outcomes for children in Albany County."

This initiative is being launched in partnership with the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA), the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA), and New York's undergraduate and graduate schools of social work, to develop new tools and best practices in recruiting and retaining qualified men and women who want to make a career of improving outcomes for children.

COFCCA Chief Executive Officer Jim Purcell, representing 110 not-for-profit community-based child welfare agencies across the state, said: "This strategic alliance with OCFS and local counties to recruit and retain child welfare caseworkers is critical to supporting children, families, and communities across the state."

Mary McCarthy, executive secretary of the New York State Association of Deans of Schools of Social Work, said:

"Professional social work has its roots in child welfare practice. The NY Deans and Directors are committed to this vital partnership. "

OCFS is providing posters and video and audio Public Service Announcements to districts, not-for-profits, and undergraduate and graduate career placement offices across the state – at no charge.

OCFS also will be coordinating recruitment and retention activities highlighting caseworkers' roles during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, Foster Care Month / Mother's Day in May, Father's Day in June, Back to School in September, Adoption Month in November, and Permanency Planning Month in December.

Downloads of the posters, PSAs, and the Caseworker Staffing and Turnover Survey are available at <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/cmd>.

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