Information Packet: **What are current salary ranges, and are fair and adequate salaries a component of effective staff recruitment and retention planning?**

This information packet was prepared by the Knowledge Management (KM) Team in response to an inquiry from Kansas’ Legislative Task Force about salary ranges in similar jurisdictions, and the importance of salary as a key component in child welfare workforce recruitment and retention. The list below is not exhaustive but provides some examples for consideration, including salary ranges for child protection staff from other agencies in the region. The information provided is for informational purposes only and does not necessarily reflect the views of Casey Family Programs.

**The research base**

There are two compilations of the research literature that highlight the importance of fair and adequate pay, and staff perceptions of salary in relation to the requirements of the job and the cost of living in their area:


- **MEDIUM EFFECT:** Turnover intention among child welfare workers was impacted by one’s perceptions of fairness in pay, benefits, and promotions (r = −.42).
- **MODERATE EFFECT:** Financial reward (r = −.29), as measured by satisfaction level of pay and benefits, also had a sizable influence on turnover intention.


- Multiple studies suggest that child welfare caseworker salary and benefits relate to worker wellbeing and turnover.¹


The imbalance between work demands and financial rewards has been identified as a key factor when examining caseworker turnover. Child welfare caseworkers may consider leaving when the financial rewards or benefits are not sufficient to compensate them for the demands of the job.

Low salary can also increase the amount of stress in a caseworker’s professional and personal life and is associated with financial strain, burnout, and low self-efficacy and self-worth.

Higher pay can increase worker commitment to the organization and reduce intentions to leave.

Salary compression and inversion – when salaries of staff with higher job tenures fail to keep pace with newly hired staff - may also increase turnover. In addition, experienced staff may receive additional, uncompensated responsibilities relative to new caseworkers, such as training or mentoring. These responsibilities, either provided without compensation, or even less compensation than their newly hired peers, may increase turnover resulting in more experienced workers leaving the workforce.

Cost of living considerations
The cost of living in a given geographic area has implications for staff perceptions of what constitutes fair and adequate pay, or a “living wage.” The Economic Policy Institute’s Family Budget Calculator measures the income a family needs in order to attain a modest yet

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adequate standard of living. Compared with the federal poverty line and the Supplemental Poverty Measure, EPI’s family budgets provide a more accurate and complete measure of the cost of living in America, and is available by county and major metro areas:

- Calculator: [https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/](https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/)
- Fact Sheet: [https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/budget-factsheets/#](https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/budget-factsheets/)

For example, monthly and annual costs in the Kansas City metro area are calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST</th>
<th>1 adult &amp; no children in Kansas City Metro Area</th>
<th>1 adult &amp; 1 child in Kansas City Metro Area</th>
<th>1 adult &amp; 2 children in Kansas City Metro Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>$568</td>
<td>$869</td>
<td>$869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$259</td>
<td>$381</td>
<td>$558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$656</td>
<td>$1176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$811</td>
<td>$917</td>
<td>$996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>$347</td>
<td>$529</td>
<td>$712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other necessities</td>
<td>$333</td>
<td>$504</td>
<td>$576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>$461</td>
<td>$658</td>
<td>$775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly total</td>
<td>$2,778</td>
<td>$4,515</td>
<td>$5,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual total</td>
<td>$33,334</td>
<td>$54,181</td>
<td>$67,939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Jurisdictional examples**

KM made outreach to similar regional child protection agencies to secure salary information for hotline, investigative, and ongoing caseworkers in the following jurisdictions: **Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma.**

Agency responses are provided in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Salary Ranges &amp; Additional Information</th>
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</table>
| Arizona    | • CPS Permanency Planning Case Workers: $15.00 - $24.06 hourly / $31,200 - $50,045 annually  
• CPS Permanency Planning Senior Workers: $17.25 - $26.59 hourly / $35,880 - $55,307 annually  
• CPS Placement Case Workers: $16.41 - $24.06 hourly / $34,149 - $50,045 annually  
• CPS Placement Senior Workers: $18.87 - $26.59 hourly / $39,249 - $55,307 annually  
• CPS Investigation Case Workers: $18.12 - $26.59 hourly / $37,706 - $55,307 annually  
• CPS Investigation Senior Workers: $20.88 - $29.60 hourly / $43,340 - $61,568 annually  
• In-Home Services Practitioners: $21.49 - $26.59 hourly / $44,699 - $55,307 annually  
• Statewide Central Intake Workers: $15.00 - $24.06 hourly / $31,200 - $50,045 annually  
• Statewide Central Intake Senior Workers: $17.25 - $26.59 hourly / $35,880 - $55,307 annually  |
| Arkansas   | • Family Service Workers (including DCFS investigators and caseworkers, and CACD investigators): $36,155 - $52,425/year  
• Senior Investigator: $40,340 - $58,493/year  
• Hotline Operator: $29,046 - $42,117/year  
CACD investigators investigate higher priority allegations and are assigned to the AR State Police Crimes Against Children Division After 3 years, CACD Investigators can promote into a Senior Investigator position. |
| Missouri   | • CSW I: $1,274.00 - $1,782.50/month  
• CSW II: $1,386.50 - $1,958.00/month  
• CSW III: $1,485.00 - $2,088.00/month  
• CSW IV: $1,596.00 - $2,615.00/month  
All hotline staff, investigators, foster care, and intact family workers are classified as Children’s Service Workers (CSWs), and salary differentials are based upon their level rather than the type of work. See [https://dss.mo.gov/hrc/jobs/csw.htm](https://dss.mo.gov/hrc/jobs/csw.htm) for descriptions of the CSW I and CSW II positions. |
| Nebraska   | • Child and Family Services (CFS) Specialist Trainee: $15.627/hour  
• CFS Specialist: $18.058 - $26.153/hour  
• CFS Specialist Supervisor: $23.110 - $34.664/hour  
In Oklahoma, all hotline, investigators, prevention workers, foster caseworker, and adoption caseworkers are referred to as Child Welfare Specialists. Levels are based on experience and responsibility as follows:  
• Level I: Entry level position, automatically progresses to a Level II after one year.  
• Level II: Full time front line worker.  
• Level III: Lead worker in each unit, who carries a full caseload and handles the more complex cases, in addition to mentoring new workers.  
• Level IV: supervisors  |
| Oklahoma   | • CWS I: $3,055.78 - $3,740.33/month  
• CWS II: $3,385.41 - $4,095.42/month  
• CWS III: $4,040.11 - $4,419.50/month  
• CWS IV: $4,603.80 - $4,807.08/month  
Levels are based on experience and responsibility as follows:  
• Level I: Entry level position, automatically progresses to a Level II after one year.  
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• Level IV: supervisors  |
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<td></td>
<td>Note that in addition to the Supervisor/Level IV CWS, each unit has four Level I and II CWS staff, one Level III CWS, and a half-time Child Welfare Assistant.</td>
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**Additional resources**

The following resources provide information about salary-related strategies employed by other jurisdictions to improve recruitment and retention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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| Patrick Leung and colleagues at the University of Houston, *DCFS Compensation Assessment and Employee Incentives Review: Final Incentives Analysis Report – 2017 Final Report, DFPS Data 2000-2016* (2017) | There is a significant disparity between the annual salary a typical DFPS employee expects to be paid and their current salary. Comparison data show that the competitive salary of a specialist position is expected at $55,642 in 2016, but DFPS data sources show that a DFPS employee received an average annual salary of $43,834 in 2016, with a pay discrepancy or underpaid value of $11,808. From a review of 17 years of data, positive impacts on retention could be predicted by seven incentives:  
1. “Comp-time Taken” will increase longevity and reduce leaving.  
2. “Overtime Paid” will increase longevity.  
3. “Overtime Taken” will increase longevity and reduce leaving.  
4. “Merit Increase” will increase longevity, reduce leaving and reduce transfer.  
5. “One-time Merit pay” will increase longevity and reduce leaving.  
6. “CPS Investigator Stipend” will increase longevity and reduce leaving.  
7. “Mentoring Stipend” will reduce leaving. |
| Melissa Johnson at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, *Overview: 2018 Fiscal Year Budget for Human Services* (2017) | A $26 million budget increase is intended to boost salaries for child welfare case managers and their supervisors by 19 percent on average. The governor’s 2015 Child Welfare Reform Council report recommended pay increases for case managers. Case workers are often a child’s first line of defense against abuse, abandonment and neglect. The starting pay is less than the annual salary needed to afford a modest standard of living for a one-person household in many Georgia cities. Low starting salaries for Georgia child welfare case managers leaves them far behind counterparts in the Southeast. |