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Washington Selects a Workforce Intervention: Telework (Blog Post)

Posted on January 15, 2019

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) will be implementing and testing the effectiveness of telework for child welfare field operations staff and their supervisors. DCYF is a state-administered system with a total of 3,075 employees. There are approximately 1,600 field operation staff and 260 field operation supervisors that make up the majority of the child welfare workforce in the agency. A comprehensive workforce needs assessment showed a strong desire among employees to be able to work from home or an alternate work site. A telework policy existed but was inconsistently implemented, and the majority of employees did not telework. A 2016 governor's executive order required state agencies to increase the mobility and flexibility of work, to better meet employee needs, modernize the work environment, and reduce environmental impact. Just prior to engaging with the QIC-WD, the agency piloted telework with a small number of employees in non-case-carrying roles and the results showed improvements in productivity and satisfaction. In partnership with the QIC-WD, DCYF aims to implement a consistent, fair, and transparent process that expands telework amongst its employees, provides necessary supports and monitoring for successful implementation, and produces evidence about the impact of telework.



To achieve the evaluation goal of the project, child welfare field offices will be randomly assigned to either participate or not participate in telework for a period of nine months, at which point the non-participating offices will be able to telework. Initially, this will begin as a pilot in one of the six regions in the spring of 2019; during this time, implementation in participating offices will be closely monitored and modifications will be made as needed. Rollout of telework to participating offices in the remaining five regions will occur after the pilot phase. Evaluation activities will include assessment of telework processes and outcomes, such as performance, work-life balance, role overload, stress and burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intentions to remain in the job, turnover, and child and family outcomes.