



# MARYLAND

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) operates a state-administered child welfare system through 24 local departments of social services (LDSSs). Although Maryland reduced statewide vacancy rates through creative recruitment strategies and compensation adjustments, leadership recognized that sustaining progress requires deeper workforce analytics, greater consistency across jurisdictions, and enhanced retention and leadership development strategies.

## PROJECT GOAL

Strengthen recruitment, hiring consistency, and long-term workforce sustainability within Maryland's Child Welfare Workforce by enhancing workforce analytics, improving selection and hiring practices, and aligning workforce strategies with Maryland's values of being data-driven and heart-led.



*"You can't let workforce development happen organically. If you're not measuring it and tracking it, the trend can turn very quickly." – Daniel Wait, Deputy Secretary for Talent & Customer Service*

## KEY FINDINGS

QIC-WA partnered with Maryland DHS to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment including areas such as recruitment, selection, onboarding, and retention practices across selected local jurisdictions.

Key findings include:

- Variation in interview practices, hiring, and onboarding approaches across jurisdictions.
- Limited insight into hiring funnel.
- Exit data are collected but not fully translated into actionable analytics.
- One LDSS's on-the-spot hiring model shows promise in reducing time-to-hire and candidate loss but requires evaluation.
- As vacancies improved, leaders emphasized shifting from "filling seats" to strengthening candidate quality, supervisory onboarding, and long-term sustainability.

## COMMON PATTERNS

- Cross-level engagement surfaced process gaps, clarified workforce development misconceptions (e.g., what types of information can usefully be collected through exit surveys), and strengthened shared ownership of solutions.
- Workforce analytics improvement is both a technical and adaptive challenge; dashboards must be paired with leadership development and culture-building.
- Recruitment gains must be reinforced by retention and supervision strategies to ensure long-term workforce stability and improved outcomes for children and families.

## NEXT STEPS

- Development of accessible reports and/or dashboards for candidate tracking data
- Bank of interview questions for each class and general guidelines related to developing interview questions and conducting interviews
- Evaluation of on-the-spot hiring processes
- Exit survey development and testing