

RESOURCE SOCIAL WORKER TRAINING APPROACH

The BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) are pleased to share the decision to work with the Justice Institute of BC (JI) to develop resource social worker training. This training will be delivered through a facilitated online curriculum, combining self-paced knowledge topics, virtual discussion board interactions, scheduled group check-ins, and offline supervision conversations with a team leader.

Resource social workers are responsible for the important and challenging role of providing frontline support to caregivers. To be effective in this role, resource social workers require consistent and comprehensive training. The objective of the foundational resource social worker training is to impart learners with the fundamentals required to contribute effectively in their role and to promote practice consistency and adherence to standards throughout the province. This training assumes basic knowledge of the provincial government and the ministry and is the first specialized component in a progressive process of on-the-job learning, mentorship and community of practice support that aims to prepare resource social workers for full functional capacity.

Background

Recommendations from the Residential Review Final Report (2012) called for MCFD, with advice and input from service partners and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs), to develop and implement a contemporary resource social worker training program that promotes more consistent and effective support for caregivers throughout the province. Up-to-date resource social worker training also aligns with the Ministry's 2015-18 Strategic Plan to develop and strengthen residential care and treatment services (Goal #3).

MCFD has partnered with BCFFPA to create a foundational resource social worker training program that includes evidence-based practices that are trauma-informed, attachment-based and permanency focused. The training will guide learners through the role of a resource social worker as per the position's job description and accurately incorporates the new Resource Social Worker Policies. Aboriginal views and teachings will also be interwoven throughout the curriculum, better enabling resource social workers to encourage and promote culturally safe care for Aboriginal children and youth.

BCFFPA has been working with MCFD, DAAs, caregivers, support agencies and other stakeholders to develop this training program. Through an extensive consultation process a course outline has been developed and approved. Resource social worker training is also being developed in alignment with the new caregiver training.

FAQs

Please note that MCFD is in the early stages of developing an implementation plan for resource social worker training. Questions and comments will continue to be tracked and addressed throughout the development and implementation process. Your questions or comments about the resource social worker training development can be added to the registry by contacting: mcf.strategicpriorities@gov.bc.ca

1. Why the Justice Institute of BC?

MCFD has an ongoing relationship with the JI in the provision of Child Welfare, Permanency, and Child and Youth with Special Needs training. Using the JI for the resource social worker training curriculum allows for continuity and consistency in formatting, messaging, language and learner experience.

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2. Why is the training online?

There are a number of benefits to the online training approach being developed, namely:

- Enhanced scheduling flexibility
- No travel required for learners or trainers - minimizes costs, associated overtime and time away from home
- Engaging interactive experience
- Standardized and consistent knowledge transfer
- Ability to ask questions, share experiences and network
- Embedded learning assessments – both trainer-led and automated
- Aligns with popular contemporary adult learning methodology
- Face-to-face structured clinical supervision is integrated into the curriculum

3. Is the training mandatory?

Training will be mandatory for all new and experienced resource social workers. It is important that experienced resource social workers also participate in the training to promote consistent messaging and practice. Many existing workers have also never been provided with formal structured training associated with their role. The project team will be working closely with the Service Delivery Division to define an implementation strategy that enables experienced resource social workers to receive the training within a reasonable timeframe. Strategies will also be put in place to ensure workers are provided with protected time to fully engage in the training without other work distractions.

4. What topics are covered in the training?

A detailed course outline was developed through an extensive stakeholder consultation process and subsequently endorsed by the MCFD Practice and Policy Committee and the Residential Design Steering Committee. Through conversations with the JI and MCFD Learning and Development Branch, the detailed course outline has been consolidated into a curriculum plan that is available as an appendix to this document (*Resource Social Worker Training Curriculum.pdf*). This JI curriculum outlines all of the topics that will be covered throughout the course.

5. Will resource social workers be required to take any additional training?

The project team has recommended that resource social workers at a minimum also participate in the new caregiver PRIDE pre-service curriculum as part of their foundational training. Worker training plans will continue to be defined throughout curriculum development and additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

6. How many hours will the training be?

The resource social worker training program is estimated to be 35 hours in length. Additionally, the PRIDE pre-service training program is estimated to be 30 hours in length.

7. Will there be an evaluation of the training that is offered?

The initial training program being developed will be piloted prior to full implementation and updated based on participant feedback. An ongoing evaluation strategy will also be discussed over the next few months.

8. When will the new training curriculum be implemented?

The project team is currently targeting the course pilot to occur early in 2017. Implementation will follow shortly thereafter in the spring of 2017.

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9. How is the implementation strategy being determined?

The project team has connected with MCFD executive to identify a Training Implementation Steering Committee for both caregiver and resource social worker training. This committee will be comprised of representatives from several ministry business areas and will be tasked with guiding all decisions relating to training implementation, operationalization and sustainability.

10. What are some examples of implementation-related questions?

The project team has identified a range of implementation-related questions that will be posed to the new Training Implementation Steering Committee, such as:

- Who will facilitate the training?
- What will be the schedule for training all experienced resource social workers?
- How will training completion be tracked and will there be compliance provisions?
- Will other social workers have access to this training?
- Will team leaders and community service managers be required to take this training?
- How long will participants have to complete the training?
- Will the resource social worker training be linked to *Child Family and Community Service Act* delegation?
- How will the training be kept up to date?