About the Alliance

In 2010, the Washington State Children’s Administration invited three of the state’s leading universities—the University of Washington, University of Washington Tacoma, and Eastern Washington University—to collaborate on improving the professional expertise of the state’s child welfare workers and the skills of those caring for adoptive and foster children.

As a unified, coordinated system, the Alliance has expanded training opportunities, increased funding, and lifted the burden of training management from the Children’s Administration so that it can focus on its core mission: providing services to vulnerable children and families.

Today, more than 30 states have formed university-based partnerships to ensure quality standardized training for social service professionals serving in state and tribal child welfare agencies.

Training that Matters

At the Alliance, we deliver training that matters so that workforce professionals can achieve mastery in their critical work with vulnerable children and families. We focus on quality, and we are showing results. In 2016, our average rating from classroom participants was an impressive 4.5 out of 5.

We now offer more than 125 training classes and customized coaching sessions to social service specialists, their supervisors and child welfare administrators at training sites across the state—a 12 fold increase in training opportunities under our leadership.

Additionally, we’ve expanded training and education for our state-supported caregivers who play a crucial role in the lives of children in foster care. Despite these gains, we continuously strive for improvement. We are using the latest in data-driven scientific tools to measure the relevance, design and impact of our training so that we can build one of the best child-welfare workforce training systems in the nation.

— Sandra Kinney, Interim Executive Director

Training Highlights

Improving access, standardizing content, employing the latest in adult-learning strategies and technologies, here are some training highlights from 2016.

- **36** E-Learning Courses: self-directed, knowledge-building instruction delivered online, any time anywhere.
- **100+** Monthly Coaching Classes: on-demand customized coaching for individuals to build skills and streamline work duties.
- **116** Classes Offered: In-person professional development classes with the latest in high quality standardized content.
- **500+** Class Sessions Delivered: on child-welfare issues and professional skill-building to strengthen foundational training.
- **2,400** Caregivers: completed classes to obtain foster-care licensing and enhance caregiving skills.

Contact Us

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS
Participant Feedback

The coaches were reassuring and supportive in my learning. I strongly recommend these coaches for further trainings.

— NEWLY HIRED CHILD WELFARE WORKER

The burnout and job satisfaction [pieces of the training] stood out for me. If you know your job well, you are happier with it. [I] want to] make sure my team is always learning their jobs and getting to be an expert so that they can come to love their work.

— CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISOR

The team work portion of the training [was] the most meaningful part for me. It’s the driver of retention in my opinion and I want to work on building teams to retain people.

— CHILD WELFARE AREA ADMINISTRATOR

Before the training we were only considering foster care to adopt a child who already had their parental rights terminated. After going through the training, we really want to be there for the children in whatever way they need.

— NEWLY LICENSED FOSTER PARENTS

A UNIVERSITY-BASED PARTNERSHIP THAT AMPLIFIES FEDERAL FUNDING

When distributing grants, the federal government provides universities with additional funds to cover administrative costs. The UW School of Social Work redirects those funds ($3 million) to the Alliance to expand its training capacity.

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A DATA-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION FOCUSED ON RESULTS

A key contributor to the Alliance partnership is POC, Partners for Our Children—a research and policy center affiliated with the UW School of Social Work. POC provides data collection, rigorous evaluation and analysis to help measure, design and improve the effectiveness of Alliance child welfare training.

A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE THAT VALUES INNOVATION

Collaborating with leading local and national experts, we are developing training content that reflects the latest research on pressing child welfare issues such as commercially sexually exploited children, and runaway and homeless youth in foster care.

Working with colleagues at UW Nursing, Medicine and Law, we are employing new technologies and live-action simulations to enhance training focused on infant crib-safety practices, child-and-parent interviewing techniques, and effective courtroom tactics.

Partnering with our tribal communities, we are sharing curriculum content and providing technical assistance to ensure ancestry charts and tribal child-welfare referrals fulfill all the requirements of state agencies and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act.