

Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System's Child Welfare Applied Learning Communities (ALCs)

Answers to burning questions.

Who facilitates the ALCs?

Staff at WCWPDS facilitate the ALCs. Agency teams bring their expertise and earnest desire to grow. The WCWPDS facilitator structures and shapes the day to draw out participants' knowledge of Wisconsin statutes and standards and support their critical thinking skills.

Who attends?

The invitation is open to every local child welfare agency in Wisconsin. Each agency may send a team. Teams must include at least one supervisor or their designee.

*Smaller child welfare agencies have unique staffing challenges and they may not be able to send an entire agency team. Instead, they may send one person if that is what staffing allows. In this instance, the person is an agency supervisor or their designee.

What can I expect of the day?

Throughout the day, there will be facilitated opportunities to build community, engage in new learning and discuss struggles and success in real practice. The structure of the agenda will be the same for each session. It will include new material each time. The focus will be on a specific area of practice or learning. Participants will:

- Reflect on the shared values that shape Child Protective Services (CPS) practice in Wisconsin as defined in the Wisconsin Model for Practice
- Receive new training developed utilizing case-level data analyzed through the Continuous Quality Improvement, or CQI process, including Systems Change Reviews
- Prepare to best support one another in case consultation
- Participate in case consultation
- Connect with one another and share ideas for improving effectiveness and efficiencies in practice

Why we developed the ALCs:

Input from the women and men who practice CPS in Wisconsin helped create this new professional development opportunity. The ALCs seek to ensure sound, consistent decision-making. The work of the child welfare system is complex. ALCs reflect our commitment to the child welfare professional delivering quality services in our state. The ALCs specifically demonstrate our value and commitment to workforce support, highlighted in the Wisconsin Child Welfare Model for Practice.

Who benefits and in what ways:

We believe how we do our work is as important as what we do. Child welfare professionals impact families, and lead transformative change in our communities. We want to empower child welfare professionals at applying state statutes, standards, and policies to families referred to CPS.

A primary aim of ALCs is to support child welfare professionals who deliver public child welfare services in Wisconsin. We seek to:

- Reinforce existing knowledge; provide clarification and new understanding
- Increase supervisor/worker confidence in application of CPS Standards and expected practice
- Support staff in their pursuit to lead quality CPS practice in their agencies

Participation in ALCs increases common understanding of how CPS practice is experienced by child welfare professionals and families. Child welfare professionals and community members, including families, benefit when we have a shared understanding, predictable application, and sophisticated integration of Wisconsin's CPS statutes, standards, and policies.

What s unique about ALCs?

The ALCs are daylong sessions developed in partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and WCWPDS. Sessions invite child welfare professionals to come together and reflect on:

- policies that govern practice and drive formal professional development
- data that captures practice outcomes and the current state of practice
- training experiences
- real practice with families referred to CPS

The ALCs are designed to benefit child welfare professionals in the supervisor and staff positions. Supervisors and staff in attendance will experience new learning, case consultation, and the opportunity to collaborate with peers from your region. Essentially, they are a forum for professional development. They provide learning and a shared experience between supervisors and staff. The aim of the ALCs is to explore how CPS professionals generally think about standards of practice and how unique cases challenge that thinking.

The sessions build community within and between local child welfare agencies. They provide a unique learning opportunity to build a broader perspective outside of the local agency and to increase our common understanding of how CPS practice is experienced by its professionals and families in Wisconsin.

There are four unique aspects of the ALCs that make them different from other trainings offered through WCWPDS:

- Local child welfare agencies send teams instead of individual participants. Teams include at least one supervisor
- Training curriculum is selected and developed in response to statewide practice data analyzed through Wisconsin's Continuous Quality Improvement processes, including Systems Change Review
- Cases are real and consultation and coaching is offered to support case practice
- Experience at the ALCs deepens supervisor/worker use of supervision

What will I learn when I attend?

Sessions include something for everyone, no matter what your learning style is!

Training topics will be predetermined at the start of a calendar year. Data about CPS practice is provided through Wisconsin's Continuous Quality Improvement processes, including Systems Change Review. These data sets will inform topic selection and guide the development of training curriculum. Topics are organized around a CPS practice theme, Interviewing Reporters and Documenting Information at Access, is an example of a CPS practice theme.

Don't be surprised if there is homework! In order to support continuous learning, there may be times when pre- or post- work is assigned based on the practice theme.

What to know about logistics:

- Local child welfare agencies choose if they want to participate
- Delivered regionally 4 times in a calendar year
- Each region is comprised of a cohort of child welfare professionals
- Participants travel within their region to a central site
- Sessions begin at 10 a.m. and last until 3:30 p.m.
- There are periodic breaks offered throughout the day, including lunch*
- Registration is through WCWPDS Online
- CEHs are available

*WCWPDS provides lunch at each session. WCWPDS invoices local agencies for the event at the standard rate per session.