

### **III. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS, PROJECTED TIMETABLE AND COSTS**

#### Staffing Requirements

Normally, organizations that contemplate accreditation through COA are faced with two human resource issues. The first issue is the staffing needed by the organization to coordinate their accreditation efforts and the staff time needed to self-assess organizational congruence with the COA standards; to revise, develop and implement needed policy, procedures or protocols; and, the time needed to assemble the required COA Self-study materials and prepare for the COA Site Visit. The second issue is additional staffing that may be needed to address COA educational, experiential or workload requirements. While both issues are important to resolve, within the context of COA accreditation, it is the second issue that is usually the most concerning for organizations and the issue that is the most misunderstood.

The staff member within an organization that will become the accreditation coordinator is critical to the ultimate success of achieving accreditation. In our experience, assigning a staff member with lead responsibility for the accreditation efforts and the commitment of organizational leadership to the accreditation process are the two most critical factors in determining an organization's success at navigating the accreditation process and ultimately achieving this quality benchmark. Depending upon the size and complexity of the organization, a staff person with lead accreditation responsibility from .25 FTE to 1.0 FTE is necessary for most organizations. NH DCYF has already identified a staff member within the Bureau of Quality Improvement to be their Accreditation Coordinator. Should the decision be made to actively pursue COA accreditation, this staff member will be able to devote most of her work time to this effort. This staff person has a comprehensive understanding of the COA accreditation process, a full understanding of what needs to be accomplished to achieve accreditation, and the skills and position within the organization to get the job done. Therefore, this is not a staffing expense DCYF will need to incur. The amount of additional staff time required to prepare the COA Self-study and prepare for the COA site visit will be dependent on the desire and efforts to make this quality improvement process organization-wide in its implementation. It is always the recommendation of CWLA to allow this process to go as deep into the organization as is possible. The true value of this accreditation process is the organizational

awareness of systemic strengths and weaknesses and organizational efforts to improve upon those areas collectively identified as needing improvement.

All too often, organizations are reluctant to pursue COA accreditation because they become concerned with specific staff educational, experiential or workload requirements. The related COA standards will be translated by the organization into the need to hire additional staff, which quickly becomes a costly endeavor. COA requires, and CWLA recommends, that organizations approach every accreditation standard with the goal of achieving either full or substantial compliance.<sup>9</sup> However, relative to the staffing related standards there are several important accreditation process items:

- ✧ COA utilizes a weighting system to determine accreditation status and organizations do not need to be in compliance with every standard to become accredited;
- ✧ Human resource standards that have specific educational or experiential requirements will not necessitate the dismissal of existing job holders, who may not meet those requirements, but will require the revision of job descriptions and job requirements for future employees for those positions;
- ✧ Caseload/workload requirements for specific direct care and supervisory staff will not require the immediate hiring of new staff but will require a proactive plan designed to reach compliance in this area;
- ✧ COA will be more concerned with an organizational approach that meets the intent of their standards rather than simply accepting non-compliance;
- ✧ The COA accreditation process is of a prospective rather than retrospective nature – that is, organizations need to make changes from some future date onward.

As previously indicated, the recent authorization to hire 43 new positions, the organizational decision to have at least one Permanency Services and one Adolescent Services worker in each of the District Offices will bring DCYF close to the intent and reality of the COA direct care worker caseloads. The CWLA consultants did hear some information about individual workers

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<sup>9</sup> COA utilizes a four-point compliance scale to rate each of their standards – full compliance, substantial compliance, partial compliance and non-compliance. The first two ratings, full and substantial compliance, are considered “in compliance” ratings and the last two ratings, partial and non-compliance, are considered “out of compliance” ratings.

in some offices with much higher caseloads and this is an area that should be addressed by State Office and District Office staff. We would also recommend that individual worker caseloads be monitored in a similar manner as other DCYF benchmarks. DCYF cannot use an average caseload across the entire system to satisfy COA staffing requirement nor does DCYF need to have all of their Child Protection Social Work staff at or below the COA requirements. DCYF does need to demonstrate that they are tracking individual caseloads, overall have caseloads that meet or come close to the COA requirements, are aware of caseload “spikes” and have procedures in place to address these anomalies as they occur.

In assessing the NH DCYF supervisor-worker ratio, it is important to begin with a clarification of terms used by COA and NH DCYF. When COA addresses supervisor workloads and supervisor oversight and case monitoring responsibility they are talking about that staff member within an organization whose primary responsibility is to provide clinical and case work support and oversight to direct care staff, who provides case monitoring functions and has responsibility for sign-off for case plans and case activity. Within the NH DCYF system, this staff person is the CPSW Coordinator located, in varying numbers, throughout the various District Offices. For each District Office, DCYF has one Supervisor, who has prime responsibility as the DCYF administrator in that particular District Office. This staff member, by design, should not carry either a case load nor have prime and on-going clinical and case management supervision for CPSWs. Their function is intended to be administrative with responsibility for DCYF activities at the District Office level, coordination with other NH state services within the District Office and community outreach and relations.

As indicated in the following Table, a review of the CPSW and CPSW Coordinator staffing level within the 12 DCYF District Offices shows that, on average, the coordinator to worker ratio is 1:6, with a range of 1:3.5 to 1:8. A further examination indicates that for those offices that have a Unit established to exclusively provide CPS assessments<sup>10</sup>, the supervisor to worker ratio averages 1:5.5, with a range of 1:5 to 1:6, which is in compliance with COA standards for Child Protection Services (S10).

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<sup>10</sup> Claremont, Concord, Keene, Manchester, Nashua, and Rochester

Ten of the 23 District Office CPSW Coordinators, almost 45%, have a workload of 1:7, with one Coordinator carrying a workload ratio of 1:8. However, even in this particular situation, which exists in the Manchester Office, there appears to be some flexibility to reduce this ratio to a more manageable level.

Table 4  
District Office CPSW Supervisor – CPSW Ratios<sup>11</sup>

Office	Number of Coordinators	Number of CPSWs	DO Coordinator/ CPSW Ratio	DO Supervisor / CPSW Ratio	DO Supervisor/ Staff Ratio
Berlin	1	10	1:5	1:5	1:7
Claremont	2	15	1:7 & 1:6*	1:2	1:5
Concord	3	18	1:7, 1:5 & 1:4*	1:2	1:5
Conway	1	10	1:5	1:5	1:7
Keene	2	16	1:7 & 1:6*	1:3	1:6
Laconia	1	13	1:7	1:6	1:8
Littleton	1	8	1:4	1:4	1:6
Manchester	4	22.5	1:8, 1:6, 1:5* & 1:3.5	NA	1:5
Nashua	3	22	1:7, 1:7 & 1:5*	1:3	1:8
Portsmouth	2	17	1:7 & 1:6	1:4	1:7
Rochester	2	16	1:7 & 1:6*	1:3	1:6
Salem	1	12	1:7	1:5	1:7
<b>Total or Avg. Ratio</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>179.5</b>	<b>1:6</b>	<b>1:3.8</b>	<b>1:6.5</b>

\* Denotes a DCYF District Office Unit (CPSW Coordinator and CPSWs) that are exclusively responsible for CPS Assessments.

<sup>11</sup> Figures do not include the Central Intake Unit which operates from the DYCF Central Office, and handles all of the CPS Screening and/or Hotline calls.

While this supervisor to worker ratio would meet both COA standards and the test of best practice, there are 42 CPSWs that have the District Office Supervisor, not a CPSW Coordinator, as their primary case work supervisor. This situation exists in every District Office, except Manchester, and results in a ratio of 1:3.8, on average, with a range of 1:2 to 1:6. When additional DCYF staff are included in the ratio for the DCYF Supervisor, the average workload increases to 1:6.5, on average, with a range of 1:5 to 1:8. This ratio, since it does include and involve direct care staff, would not meet the requirements of the COA standards. In the Conway District Office, for example, the DCYF Supervisor has responsibility for the all of the CPS assessment staff, in addition to other supervisory oversight and administrative responsibilities. This raises the questions of an overextended span of control, ability to attend to administrative responsibilities, and external responsibilities, such as community focused relations and building community partnerships to enhance the work of DCYF and provide a stronger network for children and families.

DCYF has several options available to address this situation. The options include:

- ✧ The use of CPSW III staff to help reduce the use of District Office Supervisors as primary case supervisors, pending a revision of job qualifications and job requirements;
- ✧ The shifting of CPSW supervision from District Office Supervisors to CPSW Coordinators with ratios lower than 1:5;
- ✧ Hiring of additional CPSW Coordinators to assume supervisory responsibility for the 42 CPSWs currently supervised by District Office Supervisors.

CWLA would recommend a combination of the above options including the hiring of at least four (4) additional CPWS Coordinators, who could be placed strategically in those District Offices the most in need.

### Timetable

The timetable to accomplish any staffing requirements does not need to be completed by the time of the submission of the COA Self-study or the COA Site Visit. What does need to occur is a plan, including any revised job descriptions and job qualifications, addressing the supervisory workload issue needs to be articulated and implementation of that plan needs to begin by time the COA Site Visit.

Included in the Appendix is a possible, yet conservative, timetable for achieving COA accreditation. This timetable presumes a formal application to COA in July 2004, a Self-study that is submitted in April 2005, a Site Visit that occurs in June 2005 and an accreditation decision that is rendered in December 2005. A shorter or longer timetable is possible through negotiations with COA but the attached example provides DCYF with ample time to complete the work necessary for COA, including meeting any staffing requirements.

### Costs

The potential costs for achieving COA accreditation fall within three general categories:

- ✧ Accreditation costs payable to COA;
- ✧ Costs associated with preparing the COA Self-Study and preparing for the COA Site Visit;
- ✧ Costs associated with bringing DCYF into compliance with COA standards.

The basic costs that are payable to COA include the accreditation application fee; the accreditation fee and the costs to cover the travel expenses for the COA peer reviewers to complete the site visit. The accreditation fee is based upon the organization's annual gross revenues at the time of application to COA. COA will reduce this figure by the amount of pass through funds associated with foster care payments/subsidized adoption payments; revenue generated from service areas that are not accreditable by COA; funding areas that would have no direct or indirect relationship with the delivery of services or the administration of services being accredited; and pass through funds to contract providers. Using the COA formula, the current DCYF budget of approximately \$122 million would be reduced to approximately \$22 million as



the base for calculating the COA accreditation fee. This fee, which is based on a sliding scale, is further reduced by 25% because NH DCYF is a member of CWLA.

The site visit cost is a flat fee of \$1600 per peer reviewer for a two-day site visit, plus \$200 per day for each day beyond two days per reviewer. The CWLA consultants estimate that the DCYF site visit would utilize four peer reviewers for four days.

Table 5 which follows summarizes estimated costs payable to COA.

Table 5  
Estimated Accreditation Costs Payable to COA

Cost Item	Cost	Comments
Application Fee	\$600	For new applicants only
Accreditation Fee	\$17,200	Fee has been discounted by 25% based upon CWLA membership
Site Visit Fees	\$8,000	Estimated at four reviewers for four days.
Maintenance of Accreditation Fee	\$750	\$250 per year for the three years between accreditation applications
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$26,550</b>	<b>Estimated costs for the COA 4-year accreditation cycle</b>

CWLA has estimated COA accreditation fees based upon public information provided by COA. Final costs related to accreditation will be solely determined by COA, in collaboration with DCYF.

The largest cost associated with accomplishing the work necessary for COA accreditation is for the COA Coordinator. Since this position is already on staff with DCYF, the remaining hard cost would be the cost associated with reproducing the necessary number of Self-studies. CWLA estimates the cost of reproducing the Self-study to be \$1,500, exclusive of labor.

Public sector organizations often purchase consultation to assist them in achieving accreditation or addressing specific elements of COA accreditation. While desirable and helpful, consultation is not necessary to achieve accreditation. This cost has not been included in this cost estimation.

The major costs CWLA envisions for DCYF in addressing compliance with the COA standards would be those costs associated with hiring additional CPSW Coordinators. Using the CWLA recommendation of four additional Coordinators, an average base salary of \$35,000 and Employee Benefits of 37%, the total cost for this initiative would be \$191,800. To reiterate, this course of action does not need to be completed in the immediate future but implementation of the plan should begin, if not completed, by December 2005.

The following Table summarizes the major costs areas for DCYF in pursuing and achieving accreditation. There will be unforeseen costs and incidental costs that will increase this amount, however, in the opinion of the CWLA consultants, the estimated total is a moderate cost for a state-administered child welfare agency.

Table 6  
Summary of Costs Estimated to Achieve COA Accreditation

<b>Cost Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
COA Accreditation Costs	\$26,550	
Preparation Costs	\$1,500	Exclusive of labor
Compliance Costs	\$191,800	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$219,800</b>	