

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Pete Ricketts, Governor

August 27, 2019

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Nebraska Revised Statute 68-1207.01 requires the Department of Health and Human to submit an annual report to the Governor and Legislature outlining child welfare and juvenile services caseloads, factors considered in their establishment, and the fiscal resources needed to maintain them. The report must contain the following:

1. A comparison of caseloads established by the Department of Health and Human Services with the workload standards recommended by national child welfare organizations, and the fiscal resources necessary to maintain such caseloads in Nebraska;
2. The number of child welfare and juvenile service workers employed by the State of Nebraska, the number of child welfare and juvenile service workers that provide direct services to children and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, and the average length of employment in these positions, by health and human services area and statewide;
3. The average caseload of child welfare and juvenile service workers employed by the State of Nebraska and the average caseload of child welfare and juvenile service workers that provide direct services to children and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, and the outcomes of these cases, by health and human services area and statewide; and
4. The average cost of training child welfare workers employed by the State of Nebraska and those providing direct services to children and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, by health and human services area and statewide.

I am submitting this report to fulfill the above requirements for State Fiscal Year 2018.

Respectfully,

Matthew T. Wallen, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Legislative History

In 1990, LB 720 directed the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to establish standards for child welfare and juvenile service caseloads and to report to the Governor and the Legislature every two years on the resources it needs to implement those standards. In response, DHHS' s Joint Labor/Management Workload Study Committee examined several key factors that workers identified as affecting their workload, including: (1) urban or rural work locations; (2) vacant positions; (3) availability of clerical support; and (4) travel requirements. The Committee summarized their recommendations in a Workload Study Findings and Recommendations Summary Report in July 1992.

In 2005, LB 264 required DHHS to include in its legislative report information on child welfare and juvenile service workers who are employed by private entities with which the State of Nebraska contracts for child welfare and juvenile services. The law requires DHHS to submit the report annually.

In 2012, LB 961 required DHHS and the pilot project PromiseShip, formerly known as Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) to utilize the workload criteria of the standards established as of January 1, 2012, by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). DHHS is required to submit an annual report that includes changes in the standards of the CWLA or its successor.

Below is a table containing the operational definitions utilized in accordance with CWLA guidance.

Caseload Type	Definition	Caseload Standards	Description	Measurement/ Count
Initial Assessment	Active, open child abuse/neglect investigations conducted by Initial Assessment Worker	1:12 families (urban) 1:10 families (rural)	This does not mean that the worker can be assigned 10 or 12 new cases each month unless all 10 or 12 cases from the previous month are closed. This is a rolling number. Cases assigned the previous month are carried over and counted toward the total number of 10 or 12.	Family
	Mixed; Initial Assessment and On-Going Caseload	1:7 Children Out of Home. One child=a case 1:3 Families in home. One family=a case 1:4 Families for Initial Assessment. One family=a case Total of 14 cases assigned	For On-Going Case management: In-Home or out-of-home Voluntary or Court-Involved	Case
On-Going: Includes ICPC and Court Supervision	Children residing In-Home=no children have been removed from the home due to DCFS involvement	1:17 Families	Open and active voluntary with children placed in the home. These children have never been removed and are not court involved.	Family

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*Children residing in a planned, permanent home (parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian)	1:17 Families	Open and active court involved families with the child(ren) in a planned, permanent home. These are children who are still in DCFS custody and court involved.	Family
Mixed; one or more wards in home, one or more wards out of home within the same family	1:10 OOH Wards 1:7 In-Home families Total 1:17	Open and active Court Involved children. Count only wards and does not involve non-ward siblings.	Ward =each ward out of the home count as one case each Family=any number of wards in the home count as one case
Children are out of the home	1:16 Children	These are court involved and non-court involved cases where children are placed formally out of the parental/guardian home (This includes voluntary placement agreements).	Child=Each child placed outside the home is counted as one case

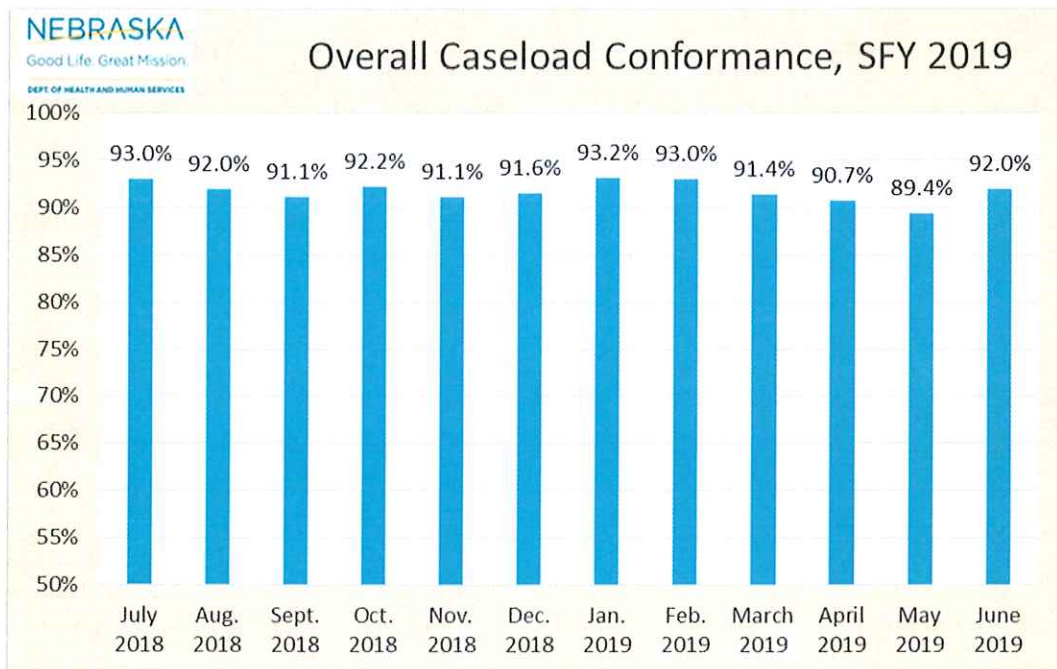
*A planned permanent placement will be defined as a home which will provide permanency for a child, this includes:

1. Child returns from out of home care and resides with a parent
2. Child resides in a pre-adoptive placement with a signed adoptive placement agreement
3. Child's permanency plan is guardianship and child lives with identified guardian

During this reporting period, DCFS continued to contract with PromiseShip for case management services in the Eastern Service Area (ESA). DCFS remains responsible for case management in the Southeast Service Area (SESA), Northern Service Area (NSA), Central Service Area (CSA) and the Western Service Area (WSA). DCFS also continues to be responsible for conducting all initial assessments in all five Service Areas across the entire State of Nebraska. Youth who are committed to the DCFS Office of Juvenile Services for placement at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center continue to be counted in the data for DCFS. DCFS continues to use the methodology developed in March 2013 by creating a weighted average for case managers that have multiple types of case assignments; initial assessment investigations or Alternative Response, and ongoing (in-home families/out-of-home youth) when measuring mixed caseloads. This methodology only counts a youth once for caseload size reporting purposes.

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Based on Legislative input, in January 2018 DCFS began using an average of caseload during the month rather than a point-in-time during the month, e.g. first or last day of the month. The table below, the subsequent caseload tables as well illustrate the overall caseload conformance over this period using the average count of cases during the month methodology. As depicted, we can see that in January 2018, 81.5% of the staff with an assigned case were assigned overall caseload sizes in conformance to the CWLA standards. As of June 30, 2018, 89.9% of the staff with an assigned case were assigned caseloads in conformance to CWLA standards, and by July 31, 2018, 93.0% of staff with an assigned case were assigned caseloads in conformance to CWLA standards.



Caseload Detail Measures:

The table below depicts Caseload Results for all types of Child Protective Services Case Management, including Initial Assessment, (Traditional and Alternative Response) Ongoing, and Combined Initial Assessment and Ongoing Caseloads. As of June 30, 2019, 92.0% of the staff with an assigned case were in compliance with the CWLA caseload standards. These counts include PromiseShip staff. Note this data is limited to staff with an assigned case, and in some situations, the assignment could be to a Supervisor or other individual as necessitated by circumstance. Accordingly, trainee positions without a case assigned are not included in these counts.

Total Staff			
Average of June 2019			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	60	55	91.7%
Eastern	180	172	95.6%
Northern	63	60	95.2%
Southeast	98	87	88.8%
Western	49	40	81.6%
State	450	414	92.0%
Green indicates improvement from prior month			
Red indicates regression from prior month			

Required caseload per worker out of home youth standard <=16
 Required caseload per worker in home families standard <=17
 Required caseload per worker initial assessment Standard <=12

The data below depicts the percentage of compliance with caseloads assigned only for initial assessment (IA, which includes Traditional Response and Alternative Response) as of June 30, 2019 using the average caseload methodology. Initial assessment workers in the Eastern Service Area do not provide ongoing case management. Initial assessments workers in the Central, Northern, Southeast and Western Service Areas may have combined caseloads of initial assessment and ongoing case management.

IA Only			
Average of June 2019			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	10	10	100.0%
Eastern	46	42	91.3%
Northern	19	19	100.0%
Southeast	16	16	100.0%
Western	5	5	100.0%
State	96	91	94.8%

Green indicates improvement from prior month
Red indicates regression from prior month

Required Caseload size <= 12 cases per worker for Initial Assessment Cases, cases are defined as a family.

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The data depicted below illustrates the percentage of compliance with the caseload standards for combination caseloads of initial assessment and ongoing case management as of June 30, 2019. The Eastern Service Area is the only Service Area that does not have combined IA & Ongoing caseloads because all Investigations and Alternative Response cases in the Eastern Service Area are managed by CFS staff.

IA & Ongoing			
Average of June 2019			
Service Area	Total Staff	Staff In Compliance	Percent In Compliance
Central	11	7	63.6%
Eastern	na	na	na
Northern	9	8	88.9%
Southeast	27	19	70.4%
Western	22	17	77.3%
State	69	52	75.4%

Green indicates improvement from prior month
Red indicates regression from prior month

Out of Home Children Standard <=16
 In Home Families Standard <= 17
 Initial Assessment Standard <= 12

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The data depicted below illustrates the percentage of compliance standards for staff with on-going caseloads of in-home youth and/or out of home families excluding initial assessment. As of June 30, 2019, the statewide compliance with the CWLA caseload standard was 92.1%.

Ongoing Only			
Average of June 2019			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	39	38	97.4%
Eastern	134	131	97.8%
Northern	35	33	94.3%
Southeast	55	52	94.5%
Western	22	18	81.8%
State	284	270	95.1%

Green indicates improvement from prior month
Red indicates regression from prior month

Required Caseload size <= 17 cases per worker for In-Home cases, cases are defined as a family
 Required Caseload size <= 16 cases per worker for Out-of-Home youth

Fiscal Resources Necessary to Maintain Caseloads

The following table displays the amount of fiscal resources DHHS needs to maintain its active staff, staff in training, and filling vacant positions within DHHS. Lead contractor staff and costs for maintaining their staff are not included. For that reason, this table displays only the amount of fiscal resources DHHS would need to maintain its own staff as of June 30, 2019. This count includes all staff with the position title of CFSS or CFSS Trainee, which includes Adult Protective Services, Bridge to Independence, Hotline, as well as Protection and Safety Children Family Service Specialists (Ongoing and Investigation).

		Count	Average Salary	Benefits	Total Annual Cost Per CFSS	Total Cost
Job Title	Child Family Services Specialist	364	\$ 39,931.54	\$ 13,904.16	\$ 53,835.70	\$ 19,596,195.61
	Child Family Services Specialist Trainee	78	\$ 33,542.93	\$ 11,679.65	\$ 45,222.58	\$ 3,527,361.10
	Vacancy	5.5	\$ 39,931.54	\$ 13,904.16	\$ 53,835.70	\$ 296,096.36
		447.5				\$ 23,419,653.07

Benefits calculated using a factor of 34.82%.

Vacancy costs projected on the planned average salary for a trained CFSS

Total Staff and Tenure of DCFS Case Managers

The following table displays the count of CFSS employed by DCFS on 7/1/2018. This count includes all staff with the position title of CFSS or CFSS Trainee, which includes Adult Protective Services, Bridge to Independence, Hotline, as well as Protection and Safety Children Family Service Specialists (Ongoing and Investigation).

CFS CFSS Filled Positions June 30, 2019								
Job Title	B2i	CSA	ESA	Hotline/RD	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
Child/Family Services Specialist	9	51	73	32	58	92	49	364
Child/Family Services Specialist Trainee		13	7	6	16	26	10	78
Total	9	64	80	38	74	118	59	442

The following table illustrates the average position tenure in years for all DCFS CFSS staff.

Average Tenure (Years) by Position and Service Area								
Title	B2i	CSA	ESA	Hotline	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
Child/Family Services Specialist	6.7	3.7	3.6	11.8	4.6	3.4	4.8	4.8
Child/Family Services Specialist Trainee		0.3	0.2		0.5	0.3	0.7	0.4
Total	6.7	3.0	3.3	11.8	3.8	2.9	3.7	4.1

Total Staff and Tenure of PromiseShip Case Managers

The following table displays the count of Family Permanency Specialists employed by PromiseShip on 7/1/2018 as well as the tenure

PromiseShip Filled Positions 7/1/2019	
Job Title	Count
FPS Trainee	15
FPS	146
FPS Supervisor	27
Total	188

PromiseShip Job Title	Average Length of Employment
Family Permanency Specialist	2.29 years
Family Permanency Trainee	0.10 years
Family Permanency Supervisor	4.82 years

Outcomes of cases, by Health and Human Services Area and statewide

State Wards Exiting Care in State Fiscal Year 2019 Includes In-Home and Out-of-Home*						
Service Area	Reunification	Adoption	Independent Living	Guardianship	Other Reason	Grand Total
Central	242	67	10	60	9	388
	62%	17%	3%	15%	2%	100%
Eastern	598	215	57	83	37	990
	60%	22%	6%	8%	4%	100%
Northern	252	73	11	42	12	390
	65%	19%	3%	11%	3%	100%
Southeast	303	120	17	45	25	510
	59%	24%	3%	9%	5%	100%
Western	300	61	8	32	6	407
	74%	15%	2%	8%	1%	100%
State	1695	536	103	262	89	2685
	63%	20%	4%	10%	3%	100%

*YRTC youth are excluded due to YRTC staff providing case management.

**Youth exiting to the Bridge of Independent program are counted under independent living.

A primary goal of DCFS' child welfare and juvenile services staff is to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect, to promote permanency and stability in their living situations to safely serve more children in their own homes, to safely reduce the number of children and youth in state custody, and to provide for community safety.

As displayed in the chart above, DCFS discharged 2,685 children and youth from state care into some form of permanency in fiscal year 2019. This is a 2.5% decrease in state ward exits from SFY 2018 (2685). DCFS saw an equal proportion of children adopted from during the 2 years, both at 20% of youth achieving permanency. The majority (63%) of children exiting care were reunified with their parents. This is a 1% increase compared with last year. There proportion of youth exiting to Independent Living remained constant at 4.0%. Also, there was a decrease in the percent of youth exiting to 'Other Reason' from 5% last year to 6% this year. The 'Other Reason' category accounts for multiple discharge reasons including aging-out, the transfer of children to Probation from the Service Areas and the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Centers, (YRTC), marriage, military, etc.

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The average cost of training child welfare case managers employed by the State of Nebraska and those providing direct services to children and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, by health and human services area and statewide

Training continues to be conducted in partnership between the DHHS and the Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The total training costs for CFS increased from \$6,479,622.55 in SFY18 to \$8,162,376.30 in SFY 19

FY 2019	Costs
DHHS Costs for CCFL Delivered Training	\$2,027,194.38
CFS Staff Costs While in Training	\$6,135,181.92
Total Training Costs	\$8,162,376.30

Currently, PromiseShip provides ongoing case management in the Eastern Service Area. The chart below summarizes the training costs incurred by PromiseShip.

The total training costs for PromisheShip decreased from \$1,069,831.60 to \$919,304.05.

FY 2019	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	ANNUAL AMOUNT
Initial Training Hours Cost	\$ 214,868.29	\$ 147,678.87	\$ 110,063.21	\$ 240,322.67	\$712,933.03
Ongoing Training Hours Cost	\$ 75,067.79	\$ 52,949.21	\$ 34,626.96	\$ 43,727.06	\$206,371.02
Total Training Hours Cost	\$ 289,936.08	\$ 200,628.08	\$ 144,690.16	\$ 284,049.73	\$919,304.05

This concludes the Department's SFY 2018 annual report regarding child welfare/juvenile services caseloads. The Department appreciates the opportunity to share this information each year and welcomes continued review by the Legislature and the public.