



September 15, 2014

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

RE: Summary of Survey Results

Dear Mr. O'Donnell:

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. Sec. 43-4407(1), attached please find the summary of annual community stakeholder surveys conducted by Nebraska Families Collaborative, the case management lead agency model pilot project in the Eastern Service Area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David P. Newell".

David P. Newell
President & CEO

Enc.





Nebraska Families Collaborative

§43-4407 Legislative Report

September 15, 2014

Executive Summary

Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) conducts an annual survey of youth, parents, foster parents, and community stakeholders in accordance with Nebraska Revised Statute §43-4407. Survey questions include those required by statute, as well as those developed by NFC with input sought from members of the following NFC advisory groups: Parents, Foster Parents, Youth, and Community.

Compared to last year's survey, NFC received more than twice the number of completed questionnaires in 2014. Of the 652 survey responses received, NFC saw significant improvements in the number of parent and youth respondents compared to the previous year. Also improved were the parent and youth overall ratings of NFC. This improvement can be partly attributed to the increased system stability during this past year. NFC is committed to continuously improving practices and is focusing on adopting long-term efforts toward positive change.

Both parents and youth rated Family Permanency Specialists (FPSs) positively on a 5 point scale. The professional skills of FPSs; consistency of visits by FPSs; and families feeling treated with respect by their FPS all scored 4.5 or higher on parent surveys. Youth also reported that their FPS treated them with respect and explained things to them in a way they could understand, with both of these items scoring 4.3 or higher.

Similarly, parents reported high satisfaction with the performance of their FPS, with many FPSs being positively commended by name in the comments sections. One parent stated, *"Our FPS is fantastic. We feel like she is part of our family. She always has our best interests at the fore front. We feel extremely fortunate that she was assigned to our case. Her calming effect on our family is awesome. Matter of fact, she is awesome in every way."*

Communication and timeliness of NFC staff have seen improvement, with one community stakeholder noting, *"The FPS workers I have worked with...have always returned my emails and calls in a timely manner. They are also effective communicators and help assist with any issues I may have."* A foster parent commented, *"I have enjoyed NFC and all the experiences I have derived from hosting an NFC foster child. Through the ups and downs the child, his family, support staff*

and myself have all benefitted through this experience.” Although improving, these areas are still lacking consistency among staff.

While these results are trending in a positive upward direction, there remain several areas for improvement at NFC and within the provider network. NFC will seek input from all four advisory groups to develop solutions that address these areas, working collaboratively to improve the entire system of services and supports for children and families involved in child welfare.

Annual Survey Methodology

Four surveys were developed and disseminated in August 2014 to the following groups: *Community Stakeholders*, including judges, GALs, attorneys, providers, and community members; *Parents* of youth currently receiving services from NFC; *Youth* currently receiving services from NFC; and *Foster Parents*, including licensed foster parents and relative/kinship families. In previous years, foster parents completed the Community Stakeholder survey. For 2014, NFC created a separate Foster Parent survey to better assess the needs and input of that distinct group. Survey questions focused on perceptions of Nebraska Families Collaborative, including professionalism, collaboration with others, and quality of services provided.

NFC provided online and paper versions for all four surveys. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale (5=Excellent, 4=Very Good, 3=Average, 2=Poor, and 1=Fail). All survey responses were anonymous and no identifying information was obtained about the person completing the survey, with the exception of one question on the Community Stakeholder and Foster Parents surveys that asked the person to self-identify affiliation with a particular sub-group (e.g., licensed foster home or relative/kinship home).

Survey questions focused on staff professionalism, the NFC provider network, community supports and services, barriers, and family-centered practices. The survey questions were developed to identify attitudes and reactions, to measure satisfaction and to gauge opinions about various areas of NFC's overall performance as identified by the community, youth, and families served.

NFC distributed the surveys over a four-week timeframe using multiple methods to ensure all NFC service recipients and community stakeholders had an opportunity to participate. NFC staff, including Family Permanency Specialists and Program Support Workers, distributed surveys to youth, families, and foster families during family team meetings and home visits. NFC also emailed the online survey links to stakeholders and foster care agencies. Paper surveys were also made available for participants at Advisory Group meetings and for the general public and visitors at the NFC offices throughout the month of August.

Parents and youth who filled out a paper survey were asked to return it using the sealed envelope provided with the survey. NFC provided the parent and youth surveys in both English and Spanish language versions.

Survey Results Summary

NFC received a total of 652 survey responses in 2014, compared to 322 in 2013. Community stakeholder responses were the largest portion of surveys received at 34% (n=222), followed by foster parents at 24% (n=157), parents at 23.5% (n=153), and youth at 18.5% (n=120). While several aggregate scores were high, the most significant increase was in the Parents composite score, which increased nearly a full point from 3.5 in 2013 to 4.4 in 2014. (See Figure 1 & Table 1)

Figure 1

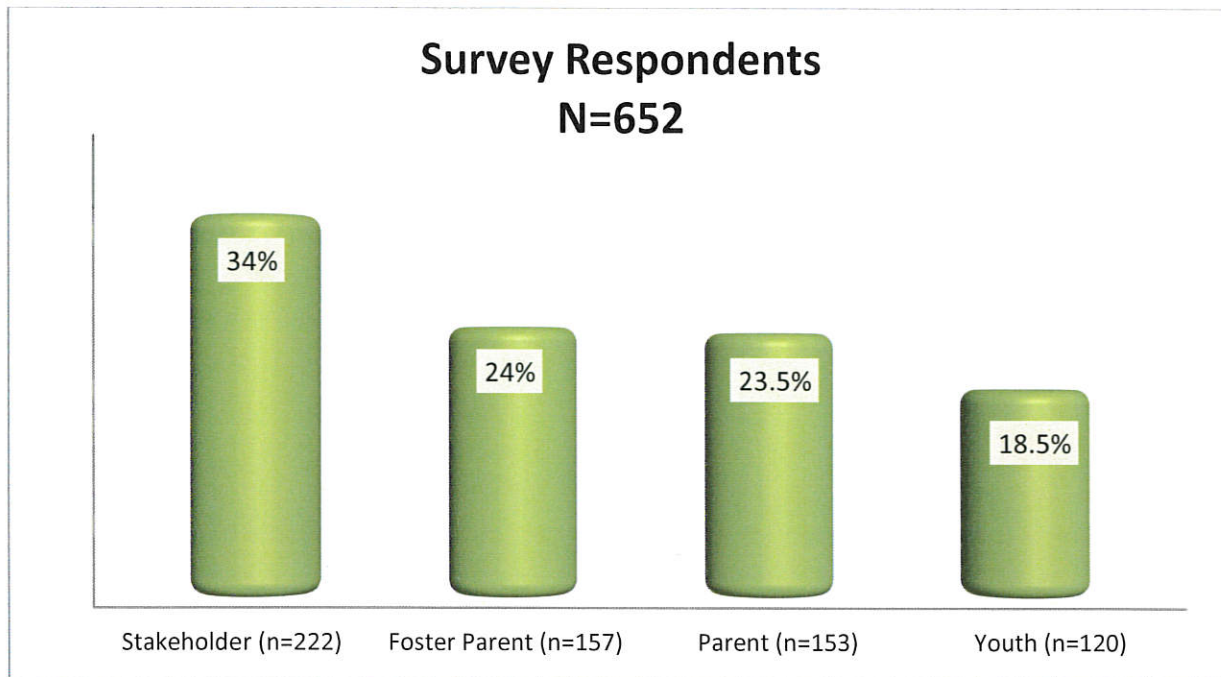


Table 1

Overall Composite Scores from 2013 and 2014
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)

Respondent	2013 (n=322)	2014 (n=652)
Community Stakeholder Perception of NFC's Professionalism and Collaborative Efforts	3.5	3.4
Community Stakeholder Perception of Supports and Services Provided to Youth and Families	3.4	3.3
Foster Parent Perception of NFC's Professionalism and Collaborative Efforts	*	4.1
Foster Parent Perception of Support and Services Provided to Youth and Families	*	3.9
Parent Perception of NFC Professionalism and Services	3.5	4.4
Youth Perception of NFC Professionalism and Services	3.4	4.1

*NOTE: Foster parent responses were included in the Community Stakeholder survey results in 2013.

Stakeholder Survey Results

Community stakeholder responses totaled 222 individuals who self-identified themselves as affiliated with the following groups: Service Provider; Legal; Community Member; Education; Other; and Foster Parent (see Figure 2). The average rating for all 14 survey items was 3.6 on a 5-point scale. On average, the items with the highest scores on the Community Stakeholder survey were those that reflected the high quality of service providers in the NFC network and NFC’s responsiveness to youth and families’ needs for medical services. (See Tables 2 & 3)

Figure 2

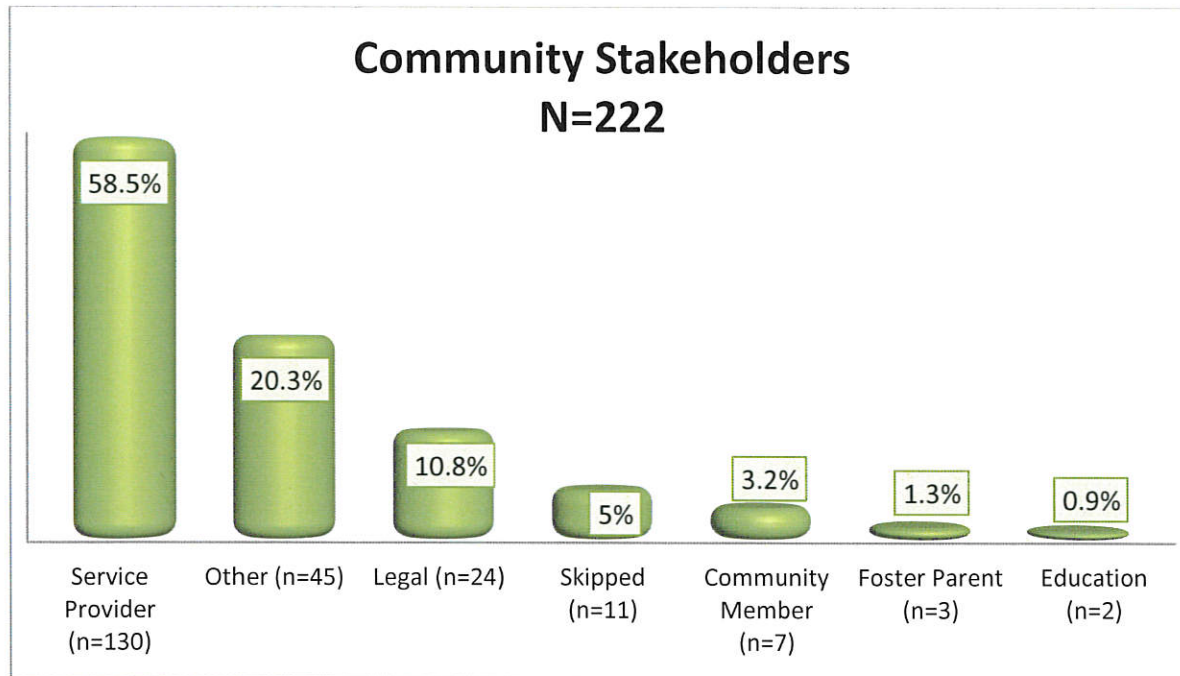


Table 2

Community Stakeholder Responses
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)

Overall, NFC staff demonstrate professional skills in the fulfillment of his or her responsibilities.	3.5
NFC collaborates with others.	3.5
NFC works with local providers that offer high quality programs and services for children and families.	3.6
NFC families are linked to informal supports and formal services that best meet the family’s needs.	3.5
The NFC Family Permanency Specialist adequately communicates with me (as applicable).	3.2
NFC provides adequate information about foster children prior to placement.	3.1
NFC responds to my requests and/or concerns.	3.3
Total number of respondents	201
Average Rating	3.4

Table 3

Community Stakeholder Responses
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)

Rate the extent to which the following services are appropriately provided to youth and families in the child welfare system:

Transportation services	2.9
Medical services	3.6
Mental health and substance abuse services	3.4
Parenting Time (Supervised Visitation)	3.4
Foster Family Support services	3.2
Payments to providers are made in a timely manner	3.5
Other services	3.3
Total number of respondents	195
Rate the extent to which payments to providers are made in a timely manner for all youth and families in the child welfare system.	3.5
Total number of respondents (excluding "unable to rate")	86
Average Rating	3.4

Parent Survey Results

There were a total of 154 parent responses in 2014, compared to 134 in 2013. Overall, parents report a high level of satisfaction with NFC staff and its services, with one parent commenting, *“NFC has been supportive of my family and willing to help me fulfill my goal of reunifying with my child.”* The two highest rated items were those related to the FPSs’ respectfulness of families and the consistency of monthly visits (see Table 4). The majority of parents indicated that things are better at home, that services have been helpful, and that there has been adequate communication with the FPS. Another parent commented, *“We are making progress, and happy it’s going in the right direction. Changing for the better.”*

Table 4

Parent Responses
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)

At my initial meeting I received the new family packet.	4.5
I had involvement in the development of my case plan and goals.	4.4
I have been offered choices about the services my family receives.	4.2
My FPS returns my call within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.	4.4
We have monthly discussions regarding my family’s strengths and needs.	4.5
My FPS assists my family in locating people who help support me.	4.3
The FPS adequately communicates with me.	4.5
My FPS demonstrates excellent professional skills in the fulfillment of his or her responsibilities.	4.5
My FPS does what she or he says they will do.	4.4
I see my FPS every month.	4.7
The NFC FPS treats me and my family with respect.	4.6
My FPS schedules meetings that are convenient for my schedule.	4.4
The FPS advocates for me and my family.	4.4
Overall, things are going better at home.	4.5
Overall, I feel the services provided to me and my family have been helpful.	4.4
NFC responds to my requests and concerns.	4.4
Total number of respondents	154
Average Rating	4.4

Youth Survey

Youth survey responses totaled 120 individuals in 2014, compared to 30 in 2013. The average overall score for all nine items was 4.1 (Good), compared to 3.4 (Average) in 2013. The majority of youth indicated that their Family Permanency Specialist (FPS) treats them with respect and explains things to them in a way they can understand. One youth commented, *“It was very helpful to me, so now I am able to spend more time with my family.”*

Table 5

Youth Responses	
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)	
My FPS asked for my ideas and opinions.	4.1
I am getting along better with my family now than I did before.	4.0
My FPS talks with me about my strengths and needs.	4.0
MY FPS returns my call.	3.8
My FPS treats me with respect.	4.5
My FPS does what s/he says they will do.	4.1
My FPS keeps me connected with my brothers and sisters.	4.2
My FPS explains things to me in a way I can understand.	4.3
My FPS responds to my requests and/or concerns.	4.2
Total number of respondents	120
Average Rating	4.1

Foster Parent Survey

Foster parent respondents totaled 144 individuals in 2014. In previous years, foster parents completed the community stakeholder survey so there is no comparison data for this group from prior surveys. The average overall score by foster parents was 4.0 (Good) (see Tables 6 & 7). Of the 144 foster parents, the majority identified themselves as licensed foster parents (n=111), while 23% (n=33) indicated they were relative/kinship foster parents. Thirteen people did not indicate group affiliation. The highest rated items by foster parents were that NFC staff schedule home visits that are convenient for them and their families (4.6), that there are consistent monthly home visits (4.5), and that they are usually invited to Family Team Meetings (4.4). One foster parent commented, "My FPS worker does a really good job at visiting and coming by. She's very attentive and helpful. She does a really good job with us."

Table 6

Foster Parent Responses
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)

I feel supported by the FPS.	3.8
NFC staff ask for my ideas and opinions.	3.7
The Family Permanency Specialist adequately communicates with me.	4.0
NFC staff return my call within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.	3.9
NFC providers adequate information about foster children prior to placement.	3.5
NFC responds to my requests and/or concerns.	3.8
I am usually invited to Family Team Meetings.	4.4
NFC staff schedule home visits at times that are convenient for me and my family.	4.6
The FPS demonstrates excellent professional skills in the fulfillment of his/her responsibilities.	4.1
The FPS visits with me monthly, in the home.	4.5
The FPS visits with the foster youth monthly, in the home.	4.5
Total number of respondents	144
Average Rating	4.1

Table 7

Foster Parent Responses
5-point Likert Scale (5 = Excellent & 1 = Fail)

<i>Rate the extent to which the following services are appropriately provided to youth and families in the child welfare system:</i>	
Transportation services	3.7
Medical services	4.2
Mental health and substance abuse services	3.8
Parenting Time	4.0
Foster Family Support services	3.7
Other services	3.8
Total number of respondents	138
Rate the extent to which payments to providers are made in a timely manner for all youth and families in the child welfare system.	4.1
Total number of respondents (excluding "unable to rate")	125
Average Rating	3.9

Next Steps

Nebraska Families Collaborative has identified various action steps to continuously evaluate youth, parents, foster parents, providers, and stakeholders to stay abreast of emerging challenges. NFC has developed strategies to improve areas that were identified as needing attention as a result of the feedback from youth, families, stakeholders, and foster parents. NFC is also taking the survey results to advisory boards for input on action items and how to effectively address them.

One survey item of particular note were the low ratings on “Transportation Services,” which had average scores of 2.9 (Community Stakeholders) and 3.7 (Foster Parents). NFC will ask for feedback on the issue of transportation from these two groups. Transportation is an area that has long been identified as an area in need of improvement prior to NFC’s contract. Therefore, NFC plans to identify barriers to effective collaboration regarding transportation and then develop solutions to remove any barriers.