

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Pete Ricketts, Governor

September 15, 2020

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 Services (DHHS) 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. Attached you will find the information to fulfill the requirements for State Fiscal Year 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Beasley".

Stephanie L. Beasley  
Director  
Division of Children and Family Services

**Legislative History**

In 1990, LB 720 required the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (CFS), to establish standards for child welfare and juvenile service caseloads. Furthermore, LB 720 required CFS to report the resources necessary to implement such standards to the Governor and the Legislature every two years. In response, the Department of Health and Human Services 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 the Workload Study Findings and Recommendations Summary Report in July 1992.

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

In 2012, LB 961 required CFS and the pilot project with 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).

Below is a table containing the operational definitions utilized in accordance with CWLA standards:

Caseload Type	Definition	Caseload Standards	Description	Measurement / Count
<b>Initial Assessment</b>	Active, open child abuse/neglect investigations conducted by Initial Assessment Worker	1:12 families (urban)  1:10 families (rural)	This means that the Child and Family Services Specialist (CFSS) can only be assigned 10 or 12 new cases each month, if all 10 or 12 cases from the previous month are closed. This is a rolling number and the remaining open cases, from the previous month are included in the total numbers for the current month.	Family
	Mixed; Initial Assessment and On-Going Caseload	1:7 Children Out of Home. One child=one case  1:3 Families in home. One family=one case  1:4 Families for Initial Assessment. One family=one case  Total of 14 cases assigned	For Ongoing Case management: In-Home or out-of-home Voluntary or Court-Involved	Case

## Caseload Report SFY 2020

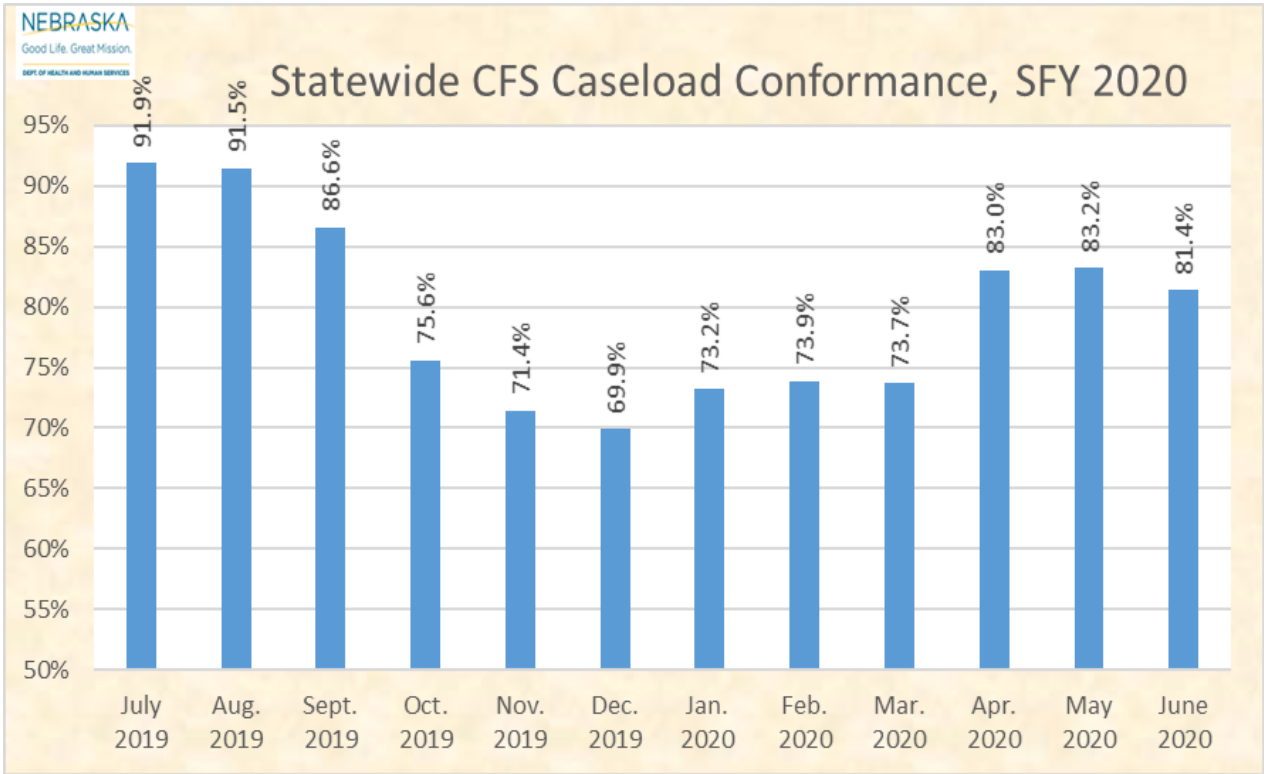
<b>Ongoing: Includes ICPC and Court Supervision</b>	Children residing In-Home=no children have been removed from the home due to CFS involvement	1:17 Families	Open and active <b>voluntary cases</b> with children placed in the home. These children are not removed and placed in foster care and are not court involved.	Family
	*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 CFS 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. The count include wards only and does not involve non-ward siblings.	Ward =Each ward out of the home count as one case  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 is a home that 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, the Eastern Service Area (ESA) transitioned from PromiseShip to St. Francis Ministries (SFM) for case management services on January 1, 2020. CFS 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). CFS also continues to be responsible for conducting initial assessments in all five service areas across the entire state of Nebraska. Youth committed to the CFS Office of Juvenile Services for placement at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center are included in the data for CFS.

Based on Legislative input, in January 2018 CFS 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, as well as subsequent caseload tables hereunder, illustrate caseload conformance using the average count of cases during the month methodology. As depicted below, the statewide data indicates in July 2019, 91.9% of Child and Family Services Specialists (CFSS) were assigned caseload sizes in conformance with the CWLA standards. On June 2020, 81.4% of the CFSS were assigned caseloads in conformance to CWLA standards. Data excludes the Bridge to Independence program.



**Caseload Detail Measures:**

The table below depicts caseload results for all types of Child Protective Services case management, including Initial Assessment (IA), Traditional and Alternative Response, Ongoing, and Combined IA and Ongoing Caseloads. On June 30, 2020, 81.4% of the statewide staff with an assigned case were compliant with the CWLA caseload standards. These counts include Saint Francis Ministries (SFM) staff. Note this data is limited to staff with an assigned case, and in some situations, the assignment could be a supervisor or other individual as necessitated by circumstance. Accordingly, trainee positions or other staff without a case assigned are not included in these counts. Data excludes the Bridge to Independence program.

Total Staff			
Average of June 2020			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	58	56	96.6%
Eastern	145	85	58.6%
Northern	65	62	95.4%
Southeast	89	82	92.1%
Western	57	52	91.2%
State	413	336	81.4%
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 table below illustrates the percentage of compliance with caseloads assigned only for Initial Assessment (IA) using the average caseload methodology. IA cases include both Traditional and Alternative Response cases. On June 30, 2020, 96.7% of the statewide staff with IA-only assigned cases were compliant with the CWLA caseload standards. 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. Data excludes the Bridge to Independence program.

IA Only			
Average of June 2020			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	11	11	100.0%
Eastern	44	42	95.5%
Northern	17	17	100.0%
Southeast	14	14	100.0%
Western	6	6	100.0%
State	91	88	96.7%
Green indicates improvement from prior month			
Red indicates regression from prior month			

\*\*Required caseload size <= 12 cases per worker for initial assessment and alternative response cases. Cases defined as a family or investigation.

The table below illustrates the percentage of compliance with the caseload standards for combination caseloads of initial assessment and ongoing case management. On June 30, 2020, 89% of the staff with combination cases were compliant with the CWLA caseload standards. The Eastern Service Area is the only service area that does not have combined IA & Ongoing caseloads because all IA Investigations and Alternative Response cases in the Eastern Service Area are managed by Children and Family Service IA staff, while ongoing cases are managed by St. Francis Ministries. Data excludes the Bridge to Independence program.

<b>IA &amp; Ongoing</b>			
Average of June 2020			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	15	13	86.7%
Eastern	na	na	na
Northern	13	11	84.6%
Southeast	26	22	84.6%
Western	19	19	100.0%
State	73	65	89.0%
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

The table below illustrates the percentage of compliance standard for staff with ongoing caseloads of in-home families and/or out-of-home youth excluding initial assessment cases. On June 30, 2020, 73.5% of the staff with ongoing cases were compliant with the CWLA caseload standards. Data excludes the Bridge to Independence program.

<b>Ongoing Only</b>			
Average of June 2020			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	32	32	100.0%
Eastern	101	43	42.6%
Northern	35	34	97.1%
Southeast	49	45	91.8%
Western	32	28	87.5%
State	249	183	73.5%
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 CFS needs to maintain its active staff, staff in training, and filling vacant positions. The table does not include the amount of fiscal resources for staff from the ongoing case management contractor, St. Francis Ministries, in the Eastern Service Area. The table displays only the amount of fiscal resources CFS needs to maintain its own direct case management staff as of June 30, 2020. 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). This data excludes all levels of supervision and excludes staff whose position does not include front-line case management activities.

DHHS CFSS Positions	Total	Average Salary	Benefits	Total Annual Cost Per CFSS	Total Costs
Child/Family Services Specialist	390	\$ 41,110.79	\$ 14,314.78	\$ 55,425.57	\$21,615,971.16
Child/Family Services Specialist Trainee	50	\$ 33,742.43	\$ 11,749.11	\$ 45,491.54	\$ 2,274,577.21
Vacancies	18	\$ 41,110.79	\$ 14,314.78	\$ 55,425.57	\$ 997,660.21
Totals	458				\$24,888,208.57

\*Benefits - calculated using a factor of 34.82%. \*\*Vacancy costs projected using the planned average salary for a trained CFSS.

**Total Staff and Tenure of CFS Children and Family Service Specialist (CFSS)**

The following table displays the count of CFSS employed by CFS on 6/30/2020. This count includes all staff with the position title of CFSS or CFSS Trainee, which includes Protection and Safety, Adult Protective Services, Bridge to Independence & Hotline.

CFS CFSS Filled Positions - June 30, 2020								
CFS CFSS Positions	B2I	CSA	ESA	Hotline/ RD	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
Child/Family Services Specialist - CFS	9	61	69	35	68	93	55	390
Chi/d/Family Services Specialist Trainee - CFS	0	3	8	5	6	22	6	50
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>440</b>

The following table illustrates the average position tenure, in years, for all CFSS employed by CFS on 6/30/2020.

Average Years in Position by Position and Service Area 6/30/2020								
CFS CFSS Positions	B2i	CSA	ESA	Hotline/RD	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
Child/Family Services Specialist	6.3	3.2	4.1	7.5	4	3.4	4.9	4.3
Child/Family Services Specialist Trainee	N/A	0.23	0.16	0.83	0.29	0.18	0.14	0.25

**Total Staff and Tenure of St. Francis (SFM) Children and Family Service Specialists (CFSS)**

The following table displays the count of CFSS employed by Saint Francis Ministries (SFM) as of 8/1/2020. This count includes case manager trainees, case managers, and case manager supervisors employed by Saint Francis Ministries as of 8/1/2020.

Saint Francis Ministries (SFM) Filled Positions 8/1/2020	
Job Title	Count
Child/Family Specialist Trainee - SFM	22
Child/Family Specialist - SFM	106
Chi/d/Family Services Specialist Supervisor - SFM	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>



**Outcomes of cases by CFS services areas and statewide**

State Wards Exiting Care in State Fiscal Year 2020						
Includes In-Home and Out-of-Home*						
Service Area	Reunification	Adoption	Independent Living	Guardianship	Other Reason	Grand Total
Central	219	49	35	7	13	323
	68%	15%	11%	2%	4%	100%
Eastern	489	185	47	47	45	813
	60%	23%	6%	6%	6%	100%
Northern	226	71	29	6	13	345
	66%	21%	8%	2%	4%	100%
Southeast	258	97	29	7	18	409
	63%	24%	7%	2%	4%	100%
Western	258	74	39	3	12	386
	67%	19%	10%	1%	3%	100%
State	1450	476	179	70	101	2276
	64%	21%	8%	3%	4%	100%

\*Youth placed in the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) are not included due to YRTC staff providing case management.

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

A primary goal of CFS’ child welfare and juvenile services staff is to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect, to promote safety, permanency and stability in their living situations by serving more children in their own homes and by safely reducing the number of children and youth in state custody, and by promoting community safety.

As displayed in the chart above, during SFY 2020 CFS discharged 2,276 children and youth from state care into some form of permanency. This reflects a 16.3% decrease in state ward exits from SFY 2019 (2685). CFS helped find permanency through adoption for 476 children, which was 21% of the children vs 20% during SFY 2019. The majority (64%) of children exiting care were safely reunified with their parents/guardians. This is a 1% increase compared to last year. The proportion of youth exiting to independent living increased to a net of 8% of all youth achieving permanency. Finally, there was a 1% increase in the percent of youth exiting to ‘Other Reason’ from 3% last year to 4% this year. The ‘Other Reason’ category accounts for multiple discharge reasons including aging-out, the transfer of children to Juvenile Probation from the Service Areas and the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Centers, (YRTC), marriage, military, etc.

**Training cost by service areas and statewide**

The table below depicts the cost of training CFSS employed by the state of Nebraska and those providing direct services to children and families under contract with the state of Nebraska.

Training is provided through a partnership between the CFS and the Center on Children, Families and the Law (CCFL) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Expenses for CFS, St. Francis Ministries and PromiseShip are as follows:

<b>CFS Training Costs SFY 2020</b>
<b>CFS Funded for CFS Staff:</b>
\$1,791,707 Direct CCFL
\$309,313 Indirect CCFL
\$6,029,917 Indirect CFS
<b>\$8,130,937 Total</b>
<b>CFS Funded for SFM Staff:</b>
\$254,132 Direct
\$63,791 Indirect
<b>\$317,923 Total</b>
<b>\$8,448,860 Total CFS</b>
<b>St. Francis Ministries Funded:</b>
\$3,755 Direct
\$495,594 Indirect
<b>\$499,349 Total</b>
<b>PromiseShip Funded:</b>
\$43,548 Direct
\$16,330 Indirect
<b>\$59,878 Total</b>

This concludes the Department’s SFY 2020 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.