

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Pete Ricketts, Governor

November 15, 2022

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.

Hereunder you will find the information to fulfill the requirements for State Fiscal Year 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script 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 DHHS 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 on 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:

<b>Caseload Type</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Caseload Standards</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Measurement/ Count</b>
<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 2022

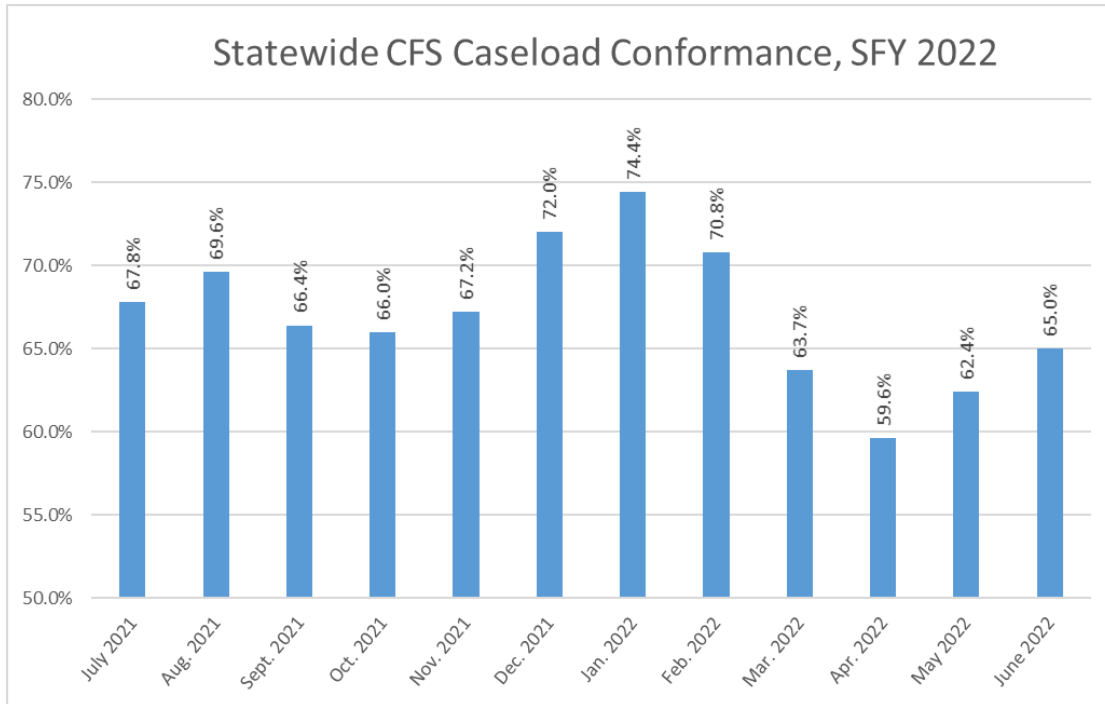
<b>Ongoing: Includes ICPC and Court Supervision</b>	Children residing In-Home=no children have been removed from the home due to CFS involvement	1:17 Families	Open and active <b>voluntary cases</b> with children placed in the home. These children are not removed and placed in foster care and are not 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 includes 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 contract was terminated for St. Francis Ministries (SFM) to provide case management services in Eastern Service Area (ESA) for Douglas and Sarpy Counties. CFS now has responsibility for case management in all of the Service Areas. CFS also continues to be responsible for conducting all child abuse/neglect investigations in all five service areas across the entire state of Nebraska. Youth who are committed to the CFS Office of Juvenile Services for placement at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center are also included in the data for CFS.

Based on Legislative input, in January 2018 CFS began using an average caseload during the month rather than a point-in-time during the month, e.g., the 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 June 2022, 65.0% of Child and Family Services Specialists (CFSS) were assigned caseload sizes in conformance with the CWLA standards. On July 2021, 67.8% of the CFSS were assigned caseloads in conformance with 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 (AR), Ongoing, and Combined IA and Ongoing Caseloads. On June 30, 2022, 65.0% of the statewide staff with an assigned case were compliant with the CWLA caseload standards. 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 2022			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	58	50	86.2%
Eastern	145	56	38.6%
Northern	61	39	63.9%
Southeast	105	84	80.0%
Western	62	51	82.3%
State	431	280	65.0%

- 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, 2022, 81.4% 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 Assessment 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.

<b>IA Only</b>			
Average of June 2022			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	7	7	100.0%
Eastern	39	24	61.5%
Northern	14	13	92.9%
Southeast	24	22	91.7%
Western	12	12	100.0%
State	97	79	81.4%

- Required caseload size <= 12 cases per worker for Initial Assessment and Alternative Response cases. Cases are 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, 2022, 68.6% of the staff with combination cases were compliant with the CWLA caseload standards. Data excludes the Bridge to Independence program.

<b>IA &amp; Ongoing</b>			
Average of June 2022			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	16	14	87.5%
Eastern	22	8	36.4%
Northern	20	15	75.0%
Southeast	26	18	69.2%
Western	22	14	63.6%
State	191	131	68.6%

- 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, 2022, 57.9% 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 2022			
<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Staff In Compliance</u>	<u>Percent In Compliance</u>
Central	35	29	82.9%
Eastern	83	23	27.7%
Northern	26	10	38.5%
Southeast	55	44	80.0%
Western	28	25	89.3%
State	228	132	57.9%

- 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 fill 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, 2022. 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 (Ongoing and Initial Assessment). This data excludes all levels of supervision and excludes staff whose position does not include front-line case management activities.

CFS CFSS Positions June 30, 2022					
DHHS CFSS Positions	Total	Average Salary	Benefits	Total Annual Cost per CFSS	Total Costs
Child/Family Services Specialists	408	\$48,574	\$16,914	\$65,488	\$26,719,073
Child/Family Services Specialists Trainee	95	\$39,740	\$13,837	\$53,577	\$5,089,829
Vacancies	91	\$46,426	\$16,165	\$62,591	\$5,695,780
Totals	594				\$37,504,683

\*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 June 30, 2022. 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, 2022								
Role	B2I	CSA	ESA	Hotline	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
Child/Family Services Specialists	7	56	118	34	45	97	51	408
Child/Family Services Specialists Trainee	0	4	45	2	21	11	12	95
Total	7	60	163	36	66	108	63	503

The following table illustrates the average position tenure, in years, for all CFSS employed by CFS on 6/30/2022.

CFS CFSS Average Years in Position by Service Area June 30, 2022								
Role	B2I	CSA	ESA	Hotline	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
Child/Family Services Specialists	9.3	3.9	1.8	7.2	4.4	3.7	4.7	3.8
Child/Family Services Specialists Trainee		0.4	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
Total	9.3	3.7	1.4	6.8	3.1	3.4	3.9	3.1

**Outcomes of cases by CFS Services Areas and statewide**

State Wards Exiting Care During State Fiscal Year 2022 Include In-Home and Out-of-Home*						
Service Area	Reunification	Adoption	Independent Living	Guardianship	Other Reason	Grand Total
Central	223	56	7	24	5	315
	71%	18%	2%	8%	2%	100%
Eastern	409	137	50	45	45	686
	60%	20%	7%	7%	7%	100%
Northern	229	35	6	26	19	315
	73%	11%	2%	8%	6%	100%
Southeast	216	84	22	37	20	379
	57%	22%	6%	10%	5%	100%
Western	212	59	3	38	12	324
	65%	18%	1%	12%	4%	100%
State	1289	371	88	170	101	2019
	64%	18%	4%	8%	5%	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 2022 CFS discharged 2,019 children and youth from state care into some form of permanency. CFS helped find permanency through adoption for 371 children, which was 18% of the children. The majority (64%) of children exiting care were safely reunified with their parents/guardians. The proportion of youth exiting to independent living was 4% of all youth achieving permanency. Finally, the percent of youth exiting to ‘Other Reason’ represented 5% of the population achieving permanency. The ‘Other Reason’ category accounts for multiple discharge reasons including achieving the age of majority and the transfer to other state agencies.

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

<b>CFS Training Costs SFY 2022</b>	
<b>CFS Funded for CFS Staff:</b>	
Direct CCFL	\$1,835,888.64
Indirect CCFL	\$316,888.87
Indirect CFS	\$6,457,616.00
Total	\$8,610,393.51
<b>CFS Funded for SFM Staff:</b>	
Direct CCFL	\$754,537.14
Indirect CCFL	\$188,636.73
Total	\$943,173.87
Total CFS	\$9,553,567.38
<b>St. Francis Ministries Funded:</b>	
Direct	\$4,994.00
Indirect	\$364,021.95
Total	\$369,015.95

This concludes the Department’s SFY 2022 annual report regarding child welfare/juvenile services caseloads. The Department appreciates the opportunity to share this information each year and welcomes the continued review by the Legislature and the public.