

September 14, 2015

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

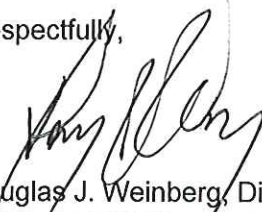
Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

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 2015.

Respectfully,



Douglas J. Weinberg, Director  
Division of Children and Family Services  
Department of Health and Human Services

Attachment

Department of Health & Human Services



Division of Children & Family Services

# Caseload Report

## SFY 2014/2015

## 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 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
<b>Initial Assessment</b>	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
<b>On-Going: Includes ICPC and Court Supervision</b>	Children residing In-Home=no children have been removed from the home due to DHHS involvement	1:17 Families	Open and active <b>voluntary</b> with children placed in the home. These children have never been removed and are not court involved.	Family
	*Children residing in a planned, permanent home (parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian)	1:17 Families	Open and active <b>court involved</b> families with the child(ren) in a planned, permanent home. These are children who are still in DHHS 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

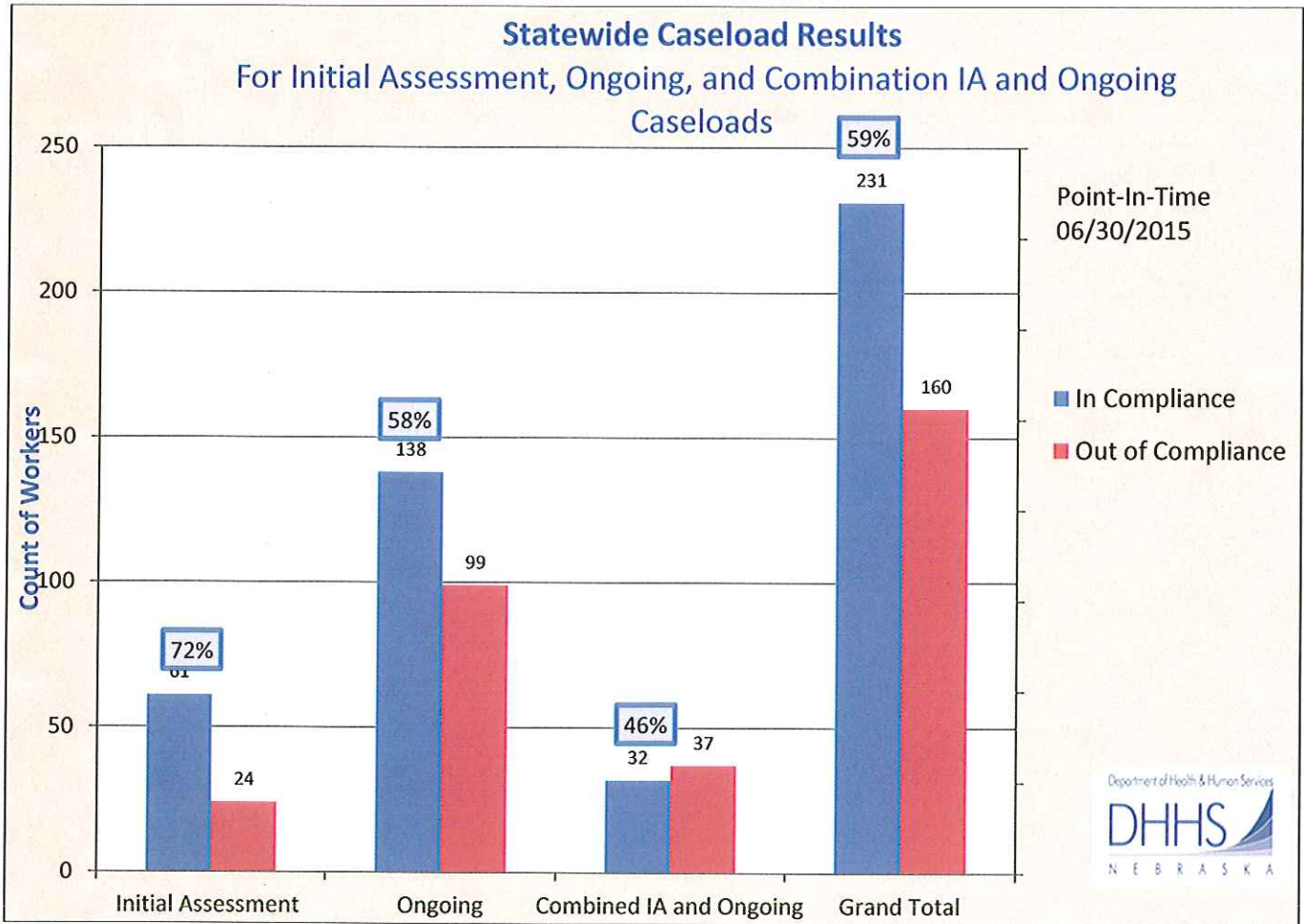
During this reporting period, DHHS continued to contract with the Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) for case management services in the Eastern Service Area (ESA). DHHS remains responsible for case management in the Southeast Service Area (SESA), Northern Service Area (NSA), Central Service Area (CSA) and the Western Service Area (WSA). DHHS also continues to be responsible for conducting all initial assessments in each of the five Service Areas.

**Comparison of caseloads established by DHHS with the workload standards recommended by national child welfare organizations, and the fiscal resources necessary to maintain such caseloads in Nebraska and average caseload of child welfare workers employed by the State of Nebraska and under contract with the State of Nebraska**

Youth who were previously made state wards in the DCFS system for status offenses and delinquency acts (LB561), are now placed with the Judicial Branch under the supervision of a Probation Officer. While the intent was to move all status offense and delinquency youth from DCFS to Probation, a small number remain with DCFS for various reasons beyond the full implementation date of July 1, 2014. Youth who are committed to the DCFS Office of Juvenile Services for placement at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center will continue to be state wards during placement and will continue to be counted in data for DCFS. DCFS continues to monitor youth who are adjudicated as 3a-No Faults and 3c, and will continue to monitor how these particular youth impact caseload sizes moving forward.

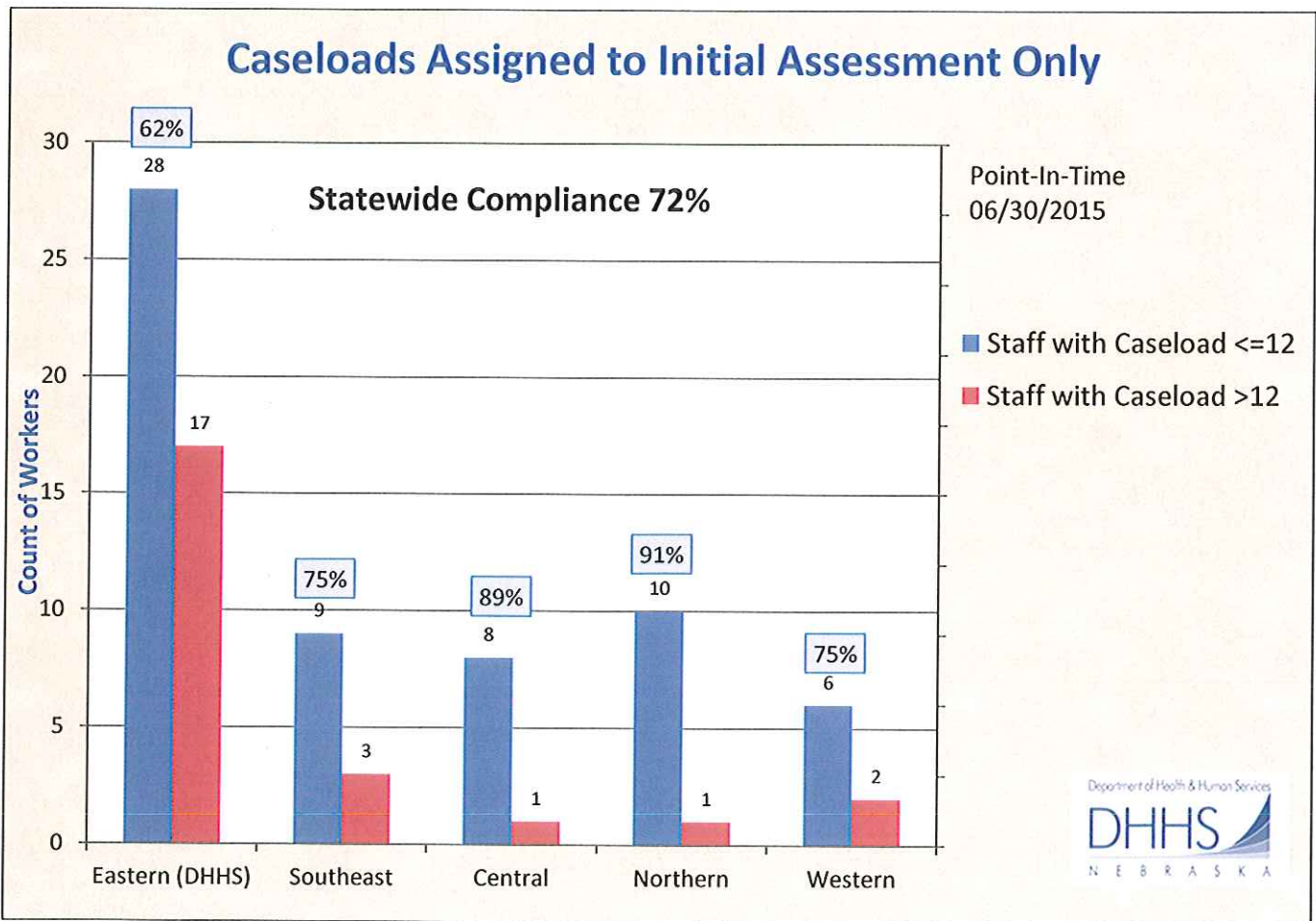
DCFS continues to use the methodology developed in March 2013 of un-duplicating all the cases and creating a weighted average for workers that legitimately have both initial assessment and ongoing work even for a short period to measure caseloads. This methodology only counts a youth once for caseload size reporting purposes.

The data below depicts Caseload Results for Initial Assessment, (Traditional and Alternative Response) Ongoing, and Combined Initial Assessment and Ongoing Caseloads. As of June 30, 2015, Initial Assessment Caseloads were in 72% compliance, Ongoing Caseloads were in 58% compliance and those carrying a combined caseload of Initial Assessment and Ongoing Cases were in 46% compliance.



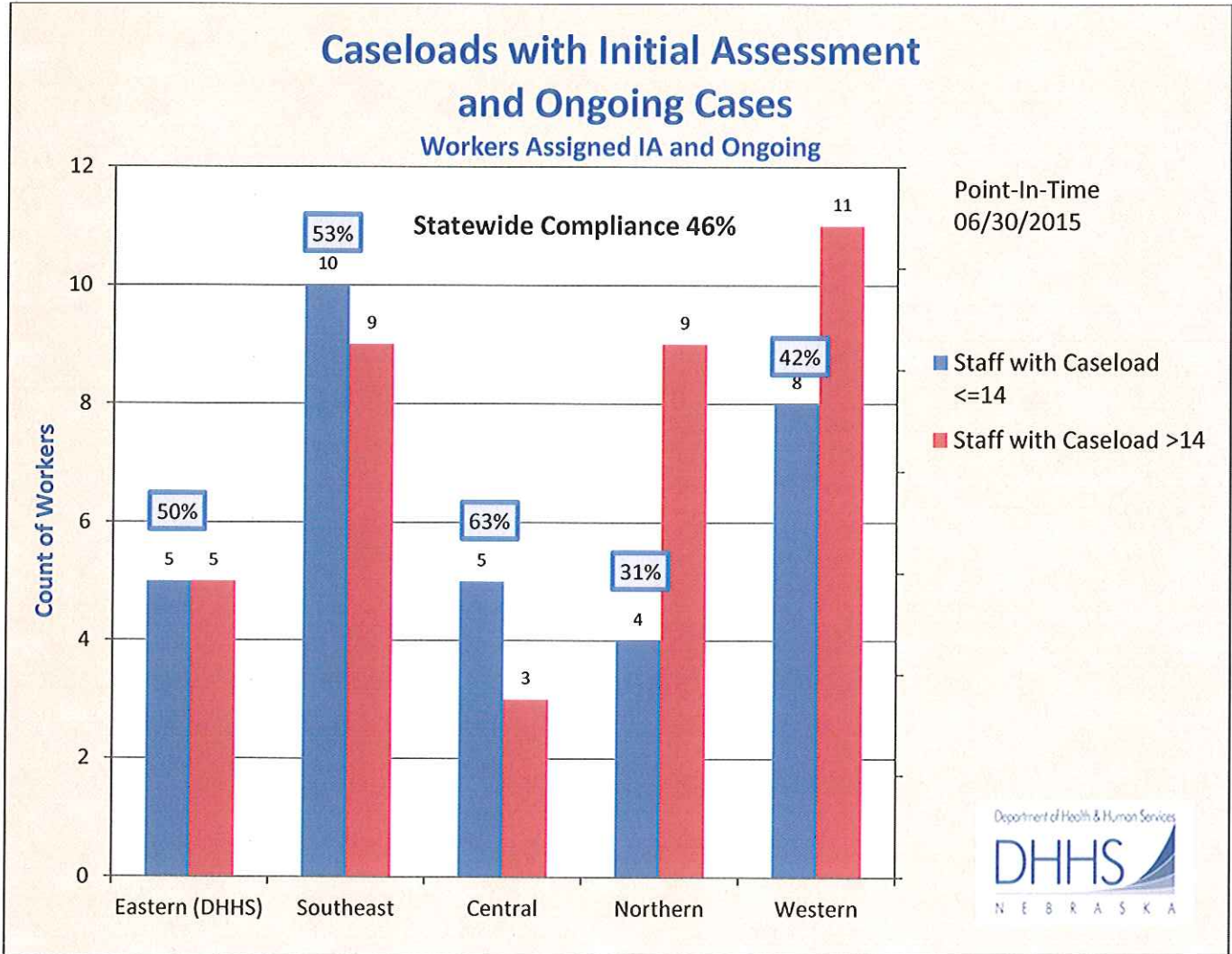
Required caseload per worker out of home youth standard <=16  
 Required caseload per worker in home families standard <=17  
 Required caseload per worker initial assessment Standard <=12

The data below depicts the percentage of compliance with caseloads assigned for initial assessment (Traditional and Alternative Response) as of June 30, 2015. Initial assessments assigned to 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. The Southeast Service Area will assign initial assessments to on-going workers if there is a case manager assigned to the family for which a new report is accepted during on-going case management.



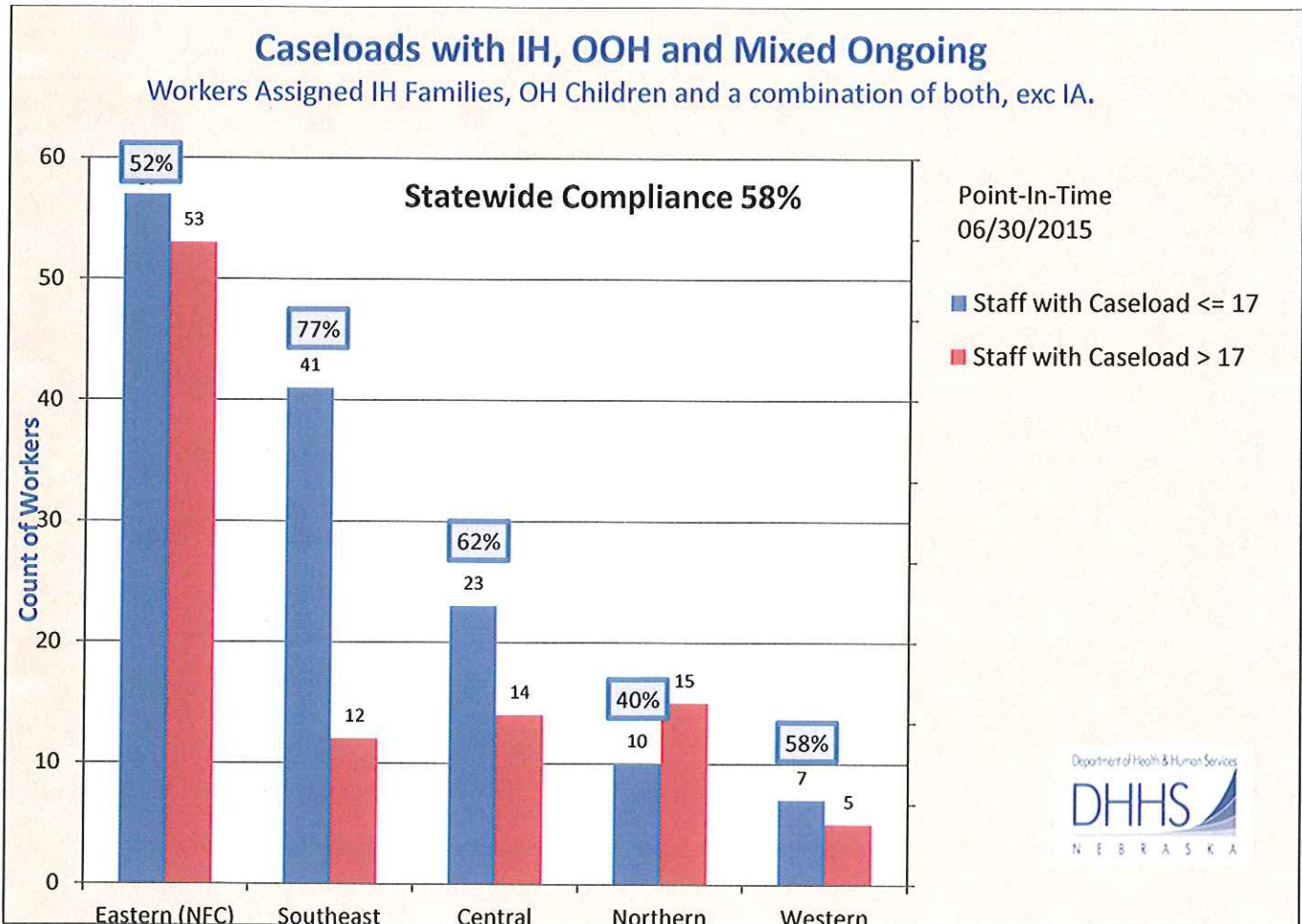
Required Caseload size ≤ 12 cases per worker for Initial Assessment Cases, cases are defined as a family.

The data depicted below illustrates the percentage of compliance with the caseloads standards for combination caseloads of initial assessment and ongoing case management as of June 30, 2015. The Eastern Service Area is the only Service Area that does not have combined case loads.



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

The data depicted below demonstrated the percentage of compliance standards with on-going caseloads of both in-home and out of home cases excluding initial assessment. As of June 30, 2015, the statewide compliance with the caseload standards was 58%.



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

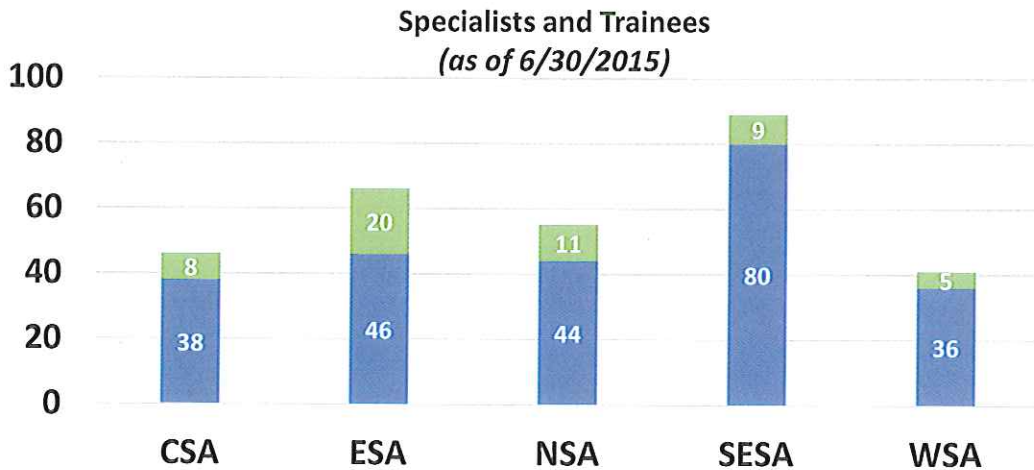


**Fiscal Resources Necessary to Maintain Caseloads**

The following table displays the amount of fiscal resources that DHHS would need to maintain its active staff, staff in training, and filling vacant positions within DHHS. Lead contractor staff and costs for maintaining their staff is not included in these calculations as these costs fall under contract. For that reason, this table displays only the amount of fiscal resources DHHS would need to maintain its own staff as of June 30, 2015.

Number of DHHS, CFSS and CFSS-Trainee positions as of 06/30/2015 with average annual salary and average annual benefits				
	Authorized Positions	Average Salary per Staff	Average Benefits per Staff*	Total Costs
CFSS	244	\$36,313.41	\$12,644.33	\$11,945,688.56
CFSS-TRAINEE**	53	\$30,943.81	\$10,774.63	\$2,211,077.32
VACANCIES***	23	\$35,518.08	\$12,367.40	\$1,101,366.04
<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>\$35,366.91</b>	<b>\$12,314.76</b>	<b>\$15,258,131.92</b>
Number of CFSS and CFSS-Trainee positions (excludes Adult Protective Services and Hot Line Workers) as of 06/30/2015				
*Average benefits are calculated by the rate of 34.82%				
**Average salaries will increase when Trainee is promoted to a Specialist				
***Authorized unfilled positions				

Count of CFSS and CFSS Trainee Workers by Job Title and Service Area as of 6/30/2015							
		CSA	ESA	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
<b>Job Title</b>	CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST	38	46	44	80	36	244
	CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST TRAINEE	8	20	11	9	5	53
Total		46	66	55	89	41	297



Percentage of CFSS and CFSS Trainee Workers by Job Title and Service Area as of 6/30/2015							
Job Title		CSA	ESA	NSA	SESA	WSA	Total
CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST	CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST	12.79%	15.49%	14.81%	26.94%	12.12%	82.15%
	CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST TRAINEE	2.69%	6.73%	3.70%	3.03%	1.68%	17.85%
Total		15.49%	22.22%	18.52%	29.97%	13.80%	100.00%

Length of Service in Position as of 06/30/2015							
Job Title		CSA	ESA	NSA	SESA	WSA	ALL SERVICE AREAS
CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST	Minimum	3 months	4 months	7 months	6 months	7 months	3 months
	Maximum	5 years	12 Years	27 years	25 years	26 years	27 years
	Average (in years)**	1.92	3.01	5.36	2.93	5.50	3.61
CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES SPECIALIST TRAINEE	Minimum	3 months	3 months	3 months	2 months	4 months	0 months
	Maximum	10 months	10 months	8 months	4 months	6 months	9 months
	Average (in years)**	5.20	7.41	4.64	3.31	4.97	4.82
CFSS and CFSS TRAINEE	Minimum	3 months	3 months	3 months	2 months	4 months	2 months
	Maximum	5 years	12 years	27 years	25 years	26 years	27 years
	Average (in years)**	1.66	2.28	4.36	2.67	4.93	3.05
<i>Length of service in position is calculated by the difference between current date and employee classification seniority date.</i>							
<i>Years, months, and days given for minimum and maximum lengths of service are rounded to nearest whole number.</i>							
<i>**Average length of service in position is given in years for Child/Family Services Specialists and in months for Child/Family Services Specialist Trainees as their averages tended to be less than 1 year.</i>							

The following table shows the average length of services as of June 30, 2015 by position for Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC), the contract agency providing ongoing case management in the Eastern Service Area (ESA).

NFC Job Title	Length of Employment
Family Permanency Specialist	1.78 years
Family Permanency Supervisor	3.35 years

**Outcomes of cases, by health and human services area and statewide**

Youth Exiting Care in State Fiscal Year 2015 Includes In Home and Out of Home, HHS and OJS						
Service Area	Reunification	Adoption	Independent Living	Guardianship	Other Reason	Grand Total
CENTRAL	279 60%	55 12%	12 3%	15 3%	102 22%	463 100%
EASTERN	719 66%	216 20%	55 5%	67 6%	34 3%	1091 100%
NORTHERN	294 64%	53 12%	14 3%	29 6%	68 15%	458 100%
SOUTHEAST	360 56%	157 25%	31 5%	37 6%	54 8%	639 100%
WESTERN	230 72%	36 11%	16 5%	19 6%	19 6%	320 100%
STATE	1882 63%	517 17%	128 4%	167 6%	277 9%	2971 100%

Source: N-FOCUS

A primary goal of CFS' 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, CFS discharged 2971 children and youth from state care into some form of permanency in fiscal year 2015. CFS saw an increase of 8% in the percentage of children who were adopted from last year. The majority (63%) of children exiting care were reunified with their parents. This is a decrease from 65% last year. Also, there was a slight decrease in the percent of youth exiting to 'Other Reason' from 9.44% last year to 9% this year. The 'Other Reason' category accounts for the transfer of children to Probation from the Service Areas and the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Centers, (YRTC).

**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.

	Costs
DHHS Costs for CCFL Services	\$2,794,676.48
CCFL Contribution	\$ 958,927.08
CFS Staff Costs While in Training	\$1,756,098.70
<b>Total Training Costs</b>	<b>\$5,509,702.26</b>

Currently, NFC provides ongoing case management in the Eastern Service Area. The cost of training new staff for the initial period of hire from July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 was \$734,799.03. The cost of ongoing training from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 was \$307,062.67. The total cost of training was \$1,041,861.70.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	ANNUAL AMOUNT
<b>Initial Training Hours</b>	18,416.50	12,576.25	3,894.75	20,363.75	55,251.25
<b>Cost</b>	\$ 130,791.46	\$ 269,835.43	\$ 186,400.50	\$ 147,771.64	\$ 734,799.03
<b>Ongoing Training Hours</b>	5,612.75	1,859.49	1,147.49	6,829.00	15,448.73
<b>Cost</b>	\$ 30,353.63	\$ 107,173.96	\$ 102,165.27	\$ 67,369.81	\$ 307,062.67
<b>Total Hours</b>	24,029.25	14,435.74	5,042.24	27,192.75	<b>70,699.98</b>
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$ 161,145.09	\$ 377,009.40	\$ 288,565.80	\$ 215,141.41	<b>\$ 1,041,861.70</b>

This concludes the Department's SFY 2014/2015 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.