



October 31, 2011

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

RECEIVED

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CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Nebraska Statutes 68-1202, 68-1207, and 68-1207.01 require the Department of Health and Human Services to submit an annual report to the Governor and Legislature that includes the following information:

1. A comparison of caseloads to caseload standards established by the Director and recommended by national child welfare organizations, and the amount of fiscal resources needed to maintain such caseloads in Nebraska;
2. The number of children and family service specialists employed by the State of Nebraska and child welfare and juvenile services workers who provide direct services to children, youth, and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, and statistics on the average length of employment for individuals in these positions throughout the state and in each health and human services area;
3. The average caseload of children and family service specialists employed by the State of Nebraska and children and family services workers who provide services directly to children, youth, and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, and the outcomes of such cases, including the number of children reunited with their families, adopted, in guardianships, placed with relatives, or achieving some other permanent resolution, statewide and by health and human services area; and
4. The average cost of training for children and family service specialists employed by the State of Nebraska, and children and family services workers who provide services directly to children, youth, and families under contract with the State of Nebraska, statewide and by health and human services area.

The attached report provides this information for Calendar Year 2010. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very Truly Yours

Scot L. Adams, Ph.D.
Interim Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Attachments

2010 Caseload Report

for the Division of Children and Family Services

Submitted October 31, 2011

Department of Health & Human Services



N E B R A S K A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This is the first report to include caseload and staffing data for contract agencies. Contracts were implemented in November 2009 and became fully operational in April 2010. Thus, caseloads for staff employed by Lead Contractors were not able to be calculated and were not fully relevant until part way through 2010. Due to the differences in work carried out by Children and Family Services (CFS) and contractor staff, caseloads and staffing data on the two is analyzed and presented in this report separately.

Under the contracts, day-to-day functions of service planning, acquisition, coordination, and delivery were transferred to Lead Contractors. These functions were previously carried out by CFS staff. This left CFS staff with more time to make key case planning decisions, to oversee service delivery, and to perform other case management actions. While data in this report indicate that CFS staff were carrying higher caseloads, they were carrying out a more limited scope of duties, or a reduced workload.

Statewide caseloads for CFS staff were at 154% of the 1992 Nebraska standards and 155% of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) standards as of December 31, 2010. This is a 12% increase from 2009. The number of intake reports, initial safety assessments, hotline coverage and placement calls, and children increased while the number of available staff decreased. Caseloads for CFS staff in all five Service Areas increased as well, and were above state and national standards. Caseloads were highest in the Southeast Service Area and the Eastern Service Area.

The following are a few highlights from the 2010 Caseload Report:

- CFS was responsible for 6,253 state wards as of December 31, 2010. This was a 1.61% increase from 2009 – the first increase since 2005. CFS was also providing services to 4,547 children who were not state wards on the same date. Overall, CFS provided services to 5,458 families. Both court (4,591) and non-court (867) cases were factored into caseloads. The number of court cases increased by 2.9% and the number of non-court cases decreased by 30.0% since 2009. Some of the decrease in non-court cases was due to data clean up, although it is not possible to determine exactly how much of the decrease was attributable to this.
- CFS conducted 14,894 child abuse/neglect assessments and received over 40,000 adult and child abuse hotline calls. Total calls to the CPS/APS Hotline, CAN intake reports, APS intake reports, and initial assessments increased from 2009.
- CFS staff decreased in the Southeast, Central, and Eastern Service Areas. Staff increased in the Northern and Western Service Areas. Statewide, there was a 6.86% (26.5) decrease in staff. Decreases were a result of staff turnover and not a result of a reduction in force.
- The median length of employment of CFS workers and supervisors in child welfare/juvenile services and their specific positions increased by 0.5 years and 0.3 respectively in 2010.
- After decreasing in 2009 for the first time in five years, turnover among CFS workers/trainees increased 3.40% from 25.50% in 2009 to 28.90% in 2010. This was the highest worker turnover for CFS since 2003. The turnover rate for CFS supervisors increased slightly (0.10%) from 8.20% in 2009 to 8.30% in 2010. This fell just below the average turnover rate for supervisors in the last seven years.
- The majority (69.0%) of wards discharged from care were reunified with a parent.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY: In 1990, LB 720 directed the Department to establish workload standards for child welfare caseloads and to report to the Governor and the Legislature every two years on the resources it needs to implement those standards. In response, the Department'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 1992.¹ The Department continues to report on child welfare and juvenile service caseloads using the standards from this report.

In 2005, LB 264 required the Department to include in its legislative report information on children and family services workers who are employed by private entities with which the State of Nebraska contracts for child welfare and juvenile services. The law also requires the Department to submit the report annually rather than every two years.

The Department is submitting this 2010 Annual Caseload Report to fulfill these requirements.

CASELOAD STANDARDS: To evaluate child welfare and juvenile service caseloads, the Department uses the State-recommended standards mentioned above, in addition to national caseload standards developed by CWLA.² CWLA established the national standards in 1992, the same year in which the State recommended caseload standards, and have since updated the standards in 2003. Table 1 displays both the Nebraska and CWLA standards.

Table 1. Nebraska and CWWA Standards

Caseload Category	Nebraska Standards (1992)	CWLA Standards (1992)	CWLA Standards (2003)
Child Abuse & Neglect Intake Reports	97 families	85 families	85 families ³
Initial Safety Assessments	10 families	12 families	12 families
In-Home Services	14 families	17 families	17 families
Out-of-Home Placement With Reunification Plan	15 families	15 families	12 families
Out-of-Home Placement Long Term or Independent Living	18 children	20 children	12-15 children

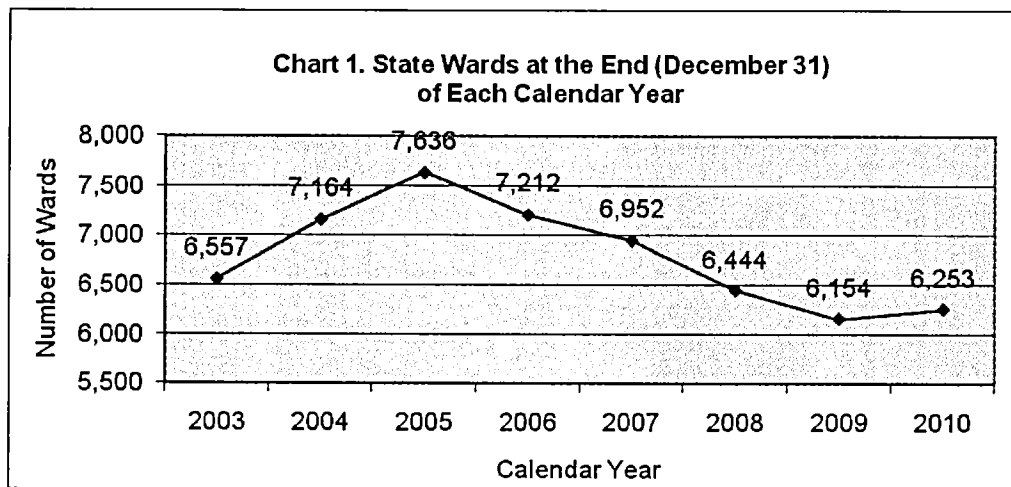
CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND ENTITIES: The Department provides case management and services to children, youth, and families involved with the Division of Children and Family Services (CFS). CFS was responsible for 6,253 state wards as of December 31, 2010. This was a 1.61% increase from 2009 – the first increase in state wards since 2005. Prior to this, the number of state wards had decreased 19.41% from

¹ Department of Social Services Joint Labor/Management Workload Study Committee. (1992). *Child Protective Services Findings and Recommendations of Department of Social Services Joint Labor/Management Workload Study Committee.*

² Child Welfare League of America. (2003). *Child Welfare League of America Standards of Excellence for Child Welfare Practice.* Washington, D.C.: Author.

³ Neither the CWLA nor Nebraska has established a standard for Child Abuse/Neglect Intake Reports. The guideline being used in this report comes from a 1986 ACTION for Child Protection report.

7,636 in 2005 to 6,154 in 2009. Chart 1 displays the number of state wards by calendar year.



On November 1, 2009, the State embarked on Families Matter, the child welfare and juvenile services reform, in which it contracted for services from five lead agencies to provide safety, in-home, and out-of-home services to CFS clients and for the coordination of services for these clients. Full implementation was in April 2010. Under the reform, Lead Contractors assumed day-to-day functions of service planning, acquisition, coordination, and delivery. By transferring these service coordination tasks to Lead Contractor staff, CFS staff were left with more time to assess cases and make key case planning decisions, to analyze and oversee service delivery, and to perform other case management actions.⁴ As a result, the implementation of Families Matter impacted the caseloads of CFS staff, not only as a result of the change in the work but also in related worker turnover and the resulting increase in the number of cases that remaining CFS staff were required to manage. More detail is provided in the 'Caseload Comparisons for Previous Years' and 'Staff Resources' sections of this report.

Please note that some Lead Contractors provide services in one Service Area, while others provide services in multiple Service Areas. During 2010, contracts with three of the five agencies have ended (e.g., Boys & Girls Home of Nebraska, Inc. in the Central, Northern, and Western Service Areas, CEDARS Youth Services in the Southeast Service Area, and Visinet, Inc. in the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas). Table 2 on page 4 displays the Lead Contractors by Service Area and the dates on which services ended when applicable. Safety, in-home, and out-of-home services in the Central, Northern, and Western Service Areas are currently being provided by CFS. Following the end of the Visinet, Inc. contract in the Eastern Service Area in April 2010, KVC was responsible for services in one-third of cases, Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) was responsible for one-third of cases, and one-third of cases were the responsibility of

⁴ In January 2011, certain case management decisions that were previously carried out by CFS staff were assigned to the Lead Contractors in the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas. Since the planning for transition occurred over the last months of 2010, many CFS staff took the opportunity to leave and work for one of the Lead Contractors. This affected our 2010 staffing levels. Because this change did not occur until after the period of time for which this report was written, it is not addressed here. This new way in which we, and Lead Contractors, work will affect and – for that reason, be addressed in – the 2011 Annual Caseload Report.

CFS. Following the end of the Visinet, Inc. contract in April 2010 and the CEDARS Youth Services contract in June 2010 in the Southeast Service area, all services and service coordination in the Southeast Service Area was provided by KVC.

Table 2. Lead Contract Agencies by Service Area

Agency	Service Area	End Date
Boys & Girls Home of Nebraska, Inc.	Central Service Area	9/30/2010
KVC	Eastern Service Area	In effect
Nebraska Families Collaborative	Eastern Service Area	In effect
Visinet, Inc.	Eastern Service Area	4/8/2010
Boys & Girls Home of Nebraska, Inc.	Northern Service Area	9/30/2010
CEDARS Youth Services	Southeast Service Area	6/30/2010
KVC	Southeast Service Area	In effect
Visinet, Inc.	Southeast Service Area	4/8/2010
Boys & Girls Home of Nebraska, Inc.	Western Service Area	9/30/2010

The bulk of this report focuses on the CFS caseloads and staff. Caseloads and staff information for the Lead Contractors comprises its own section at the end of this report (page 19). This information is kept separate because of the different work tasks each performed during 2010, with the Lead Contractors coordinating and delivering services and CFS staff overseeing service coordination and delivery (overall, case management functions).

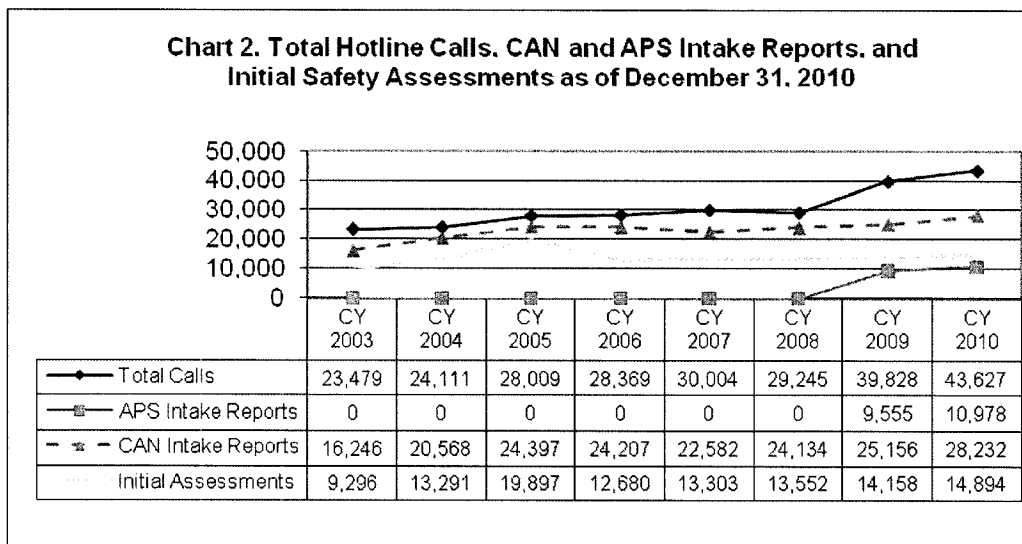
CHILD/ADULT ABUSE/NEGLECT HOTLINE: The Department operates Nebraska's Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline (Hotline). The Hotline is physically located in Omaha (the Eastern Service Area). In prior years, Hotline calls received during business hours (i.e., 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) in the Northern, Western, and Central Service Areas were handled in those areas. Staff in the Eastern Service Area handled calls for the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas during business hours and for the entire state during non-business hour, weekends, and holidays. Thus, all Service Areas handled Hotline calls.

In late 2009, CFS began to centralize Hotline functions in the Eastern Service Area. The Hotline was completely centralized and functioning in Omaha by January 1, 2010. As a result, Hotline calls received in the Northern, Western, and Central Service Areas decreased significantly and calls in the Eastern Service Area increased significantly in 2010. (Please see Attachment D for a comparison of calls by Service Area between 2009 and 2010.)

The calls received by the Hotline include calls alleging abuse and neglect (or Intakes Reports), informational inquiries, and other calls. Calls alleging abuse and neglect can be further categorized into child abuse and neglect (CAN) intakes and adult protective services (APS) intakes. Of the CAN intakes, over half (52.76%) were accepted for initial safety assessment in 2010.

Chart 2 on page 5 shows the total number of calls received by the Hotline over the last several years, the number of calls alleging abuse and neglect (CAN and APS intakes), and CAN intakes that move on to be accepted for initial safety assessment. Because these categories are subcategories of one another and show the progress of a call through an initial report to an initial safety assessment, the sum of the last three categories does not equal the first.

Chart 2. Total Hotline Calls, CAN and APS Intake Reports, and Initial Safety Assessments as of December 31, 2010



The Hotline data generally show an increasing number of total calls, adult protective services intakes, child abuse/neglect intakes, and initial assessments each year, with only a few exceptions. Total Hotline calls decreased slightly from 2007 to 2008, CAN intakes dipped in 2007 but returned to prior numbers in 2008, and initial safety assessments spiked in 2005 but dropped below the 2004 level in 2006. Also, we did not begin reporting the number of APS intakes until 2009. While the data show an increase in APS intakes, the trend is only based on two years of data.

It should be noted that in addition to the Hotline calls charted above, Hotline staff in the Eastern Service Area handle a number of calls on placement and coverage issues (i.e., finding placements, securing transportation, looking up Medicaid numbers, processing background checks, etc.). While these calls increased 41.90%, from 42,341 in 2009 to 60,081 in 2010, the number of workers assigned to handle these calls increased as well. Attachments A and B of this report provides the volume of calls and the impact these calls have on the caseloads of workers.

JUVENILE SERVICES ASSESSMENTS: Additionally, CFS conducts a Youth Level of Service/Case Management (YLS/CMI) on youth receiving services as an Office of Juvenile Services (OJS) ward. The YLS/CMI is conducted at different stages of a youth's commitment to determine the proper level of service they should receive. In 2010, CFS conducted 3,999 YLS/CMI assessments.

CASELOAD COMPARISONS FOR 2010: Table 3 on page 6 displays statewide caseload levels for trained CFS staff in the workforce as of December 31, 2010 (column 4), in comparison to the caseload levels recommended in the 1992 Nebraska (column 5) and 2003 CWLA standards (column 6). Attachments A and B provide additional tables displaying caseload levels for CFS and contract staff by agency, Service Area, and State.

Table 3. Caseloads per Standards as of December 31, 2010

Caseload Category (Column 1)	Monthly Workload (2)	Current Staff Allocation (3)	Average Caseload (4)	1992 Nebraska Standards (5)	Estimated FTEs Needed to Meet Ne. Standards (6)	2003 CWLA Standards (7)	Estimated FTEs Needed to Meet CWLA Standards (8)
Non-Child Abuse/Neglect Calls	368.08	0.33	1,112.77	No standard*	0.51	No standard*	0.51
Coverage and Placement Calls (Eastern Service Area)	3,466.08	22.86	151.61	No standard*	35.33	No standard*	35.33
Child Abuse/Neglect Intake Reports	1,111.50 families	7.94	140.06	97 families	11.46	85 families	13.08
Initial Safety Assessments	1,241.17 families	73.64	16.86	10 families	124.12	12 families	103.43
In-Home Services	2,595.00 families	109.38	23.72	14 families	185.36	17 families	152.65
Out-of-Home Placement With Reunification Plan	1,961.00 families	95.13	20.61	15 families	130.73	12 families	163.42
Out-of-Home Placement Long-term or Independent Living	1,210.00 children	50.72	23.86	18 children	67.22	12 to 15 children (13.5)	89.63
Total Workers Needed					554.73		558.04
Total Workers Currently In the Workforce					360.00		360.00
Total Workers in Training					12.00		12.00
Total Vacancies					83.00		83.00
Additional Workers Needed (excluding those in Training and Vacant Positions)					194.73		198.04
Additional Workers Needed (if all workers were trained and all vacant positions filled)					99.83		103.04

* There are no standards for these categories. Guidelines from a 1986 ACTION for Protection Report were used to calculate caseloads in these categories.

As indicated in Table 1, national and state caseload standards are specific to different categories of work (e.g., child abuse and neglect intake reports, initial safety assessment, etc.). There are currently no standards, however, for receiving general Hotline calls or processing other types of calls such as placement or coverage calls. The only existing guideline for caseloads on Hotline and placement calls was borrowed from a 1986 ACTION for Protection Report.

An example of a caseload standard specific to one category of work is that, according to CWLA standards, initial assessment workers should be assigned to work with no more than 12 families on average. To compare Nebraska's performance to this standard, we must calculate the average number of cases per initial assessment worker. Because children and family service specialists (CFSS) perform duties in multiple categories, identifying the exact number of workers who currently perform duties within each

category is not a straightforward process. Thus, we cannot calculate directly the average number of cases per worker per category. Instead, we can only estimate these figures for each category based on overall calculations across categories. The way in which these estimates were calculated is included in Attachment E.

These calculations not only provide the average caseload within each caseload category, but they also allow for a direct comparison between the current worker allocation (column 3) within each caseload category and the number of workers that are needed to meet state and national standards within each caseload category (columns 6 and 8).

Table 4 displays the number of workers needed to meet caseload standards, the number of CFS workers that were actually available, and the average caseloads for these workers as a percent of the Nebraska and CWLA standards. As displayed in Table 4, statewide caseloads were at 154% of the 1992 Nebraska standards and 155% of the CWLA standards as of December 31, 2010. Attachment B provides this information by Service Area.

Table 4. Caseloads per Standards as of December 31, 2010*

<i>Nebraska Standards</i>	
Total Workers Needed	554.73
Total Workers Available	360.00
Total Workers in Training	12.00
Total Vacancies	83.00
Workload as % of Standard	154%
<i>CWLA Standards</i>	
Total Workers Needed	558.04
Total Workers Available	360.00
Total Workers in Training	12.00
Total Vacancies	83.00
Workload as % of Standard	155%

*Excludes APS workers.

Table 5 provides the caseloads of CFS staff by Service Area as a percent of the Nebraska and CWLA standards (also provided in Attachment B). Caseloads in all five Service Areas were above state and national standards, ranging from 112% to 199% depending on the standards and Service Area. Caseloads were highest in the Southeast Service Area (199% per state standards and 195% per national standards) and the Eastern Service Area (151% per state standards and 156% per national standards). Caseloads were lowest (but still above standards) in the Northern Service area, at 115% per state standards and 112% per national standards.

Table 5. Caseloads per Standards by Service Area as of December 31, 2010

Service Area	Nebraska Standards	CWLA Standards
Central Service Area	138%	140%
Eastern Service Area	151%	156%
Northern Service Area	115%	112%
Southeast Service Area	199%	195%
Western Service Area	143%	140%

CASELOAD COMPARISONS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS: In 2003, caseloads were at 129% of the levels recommended by the Workload Study Findings and Recommendations Summary Report. The following year, LB 1089 provided funding for the Department to hire an additional 120 child welfare and juvenile service staff. The Department applied the ratios suggested in the Workload Study Findings and Recommendations Summary Report to guide the allocation of these positions throughout the state, and the distribution of supervisory and clerical support within each Service Area. The ratios were 1 supervisor to every 10 workers; 2 case aides to every 10 workers; and 2 other administrative staff to every 10 workers. After the allocation of the additional positions, caseloads began to decline to 119% per the Nebraska standards in 2004, 114% in 2005, and 96% in 2006.

In 2007, the State implemented a new safety assessment process, the Nebraska Safety Intervention System (NSIS). The NSIS model guides CFS workers to assess safety in a holistic way, assessing the entire family and situation rather than determining only whether a specific maltreatment allegation occurred. NSIS also enables CFS workers to work with families without court involvement to assure safety in the family home. Prior to the implementation of this new system, non-court involved cases comprised a small number of cases. In fact, it was not until 2007 – with the new system in place – that the Department became better able to track non-court involved cases. As a result, non-court involved cases are now included when calculating caseloads from 2007 on. Reports submitted prior to 2009 did not contain these data.

Caseloads increased to 122% of both standards in 2007. As indicated in the 2009 Annual Caseload Report, approximately 15% of the increase using the Nebraska standards and 12% using the CWLA standards was attributable to better tracking of non-court involved cases in the system via the new safety assessment process mentioned above.

Caseloads decreased slightly to 119% per state standards and 118% per national standards in 2008 and increased to 142% per state standards and 143% per national standards in 2009. This increase was due to the termination of case management service contracts with five Integrated Care Coordination Units (ICCU). The ICCUs developed as part of a cooperative agreement between the Department and five of the six Behavioral Health Regions and were designed to serve children, youth, and families with needs that were more complex and which required services that were more intensive. Staff was comprised of CFS workers employed by the Department and children and family services workers employed by the Regions. CFS phased out the use of the ICCUs in 2009 and by December 31, 2009, the time at which data was pulled for the 2009 Annual Caseload Report, these positions no longer existed. In 2008, ICCU workers comprised 20% of the available workforce throughout the state. The termination of these contracts resulted in a 14% decrease in available staff statewide in 2009.

In 2010, caseloads increased to 154% per state standards and 155% per national standards. While the number of intake reports, initial safety assessments, hotline coverage and placement calls, and children increased (by 21.28%, 5.20%, 59.80%, and 2.48% respectively), the number of available staff decreased by 6.86%. A possible reason for the decrease in staff is that CFS staff began to pursue other employment

options after learning of the changes in roles and responsibilities under Families Matter (please see page 14 for more detail). There was no specific effort to reduce staff. Table 6 displays caseloads per standards by calendar year.

Table 6. Caseloads per Standards by Calendar Year

Calendar Year	Nebraska Standards	CWLA Standards
2003	129%	---
2004	119%	---
2005	114%	---
2006	96%	104%
2007*	122%	122%
2008*	119%	118%
2009*	142%	143%
2010*	154%	155%

--- Data to compare the Nebraska and CWLA standards from 2003-2006 is not available.

* Caseload calculations include non-court involved cases.

Please note that under Families Matter, day-to-day functions of service planning, acquisition, coordination, and delivery were transferred to Lead Contractors starting in November 2009 with full implementation in April 2010. These functions were previously carried out by CFS staff. This left CFS staff with more time to assess cases and make key case planning decisions, to analyze and oversee service delivery, and to perform other case management actions. Thus, the data indicate that CFS staff were carrying higher caseloads but they were carrying out a more limited scope of case management duties (in other words, a reduced workload).

On another note, the lead contract agencies did not carry out any duties related to child abuse and neglect intake reports or initial safety assessments. CFS staff were assigned these tasks. Thus, the increase in the number of intake reports, initial safety assessments, and hotline coverage and placement calls in 2010 was absorbed solely by CFS and impacted only CFS staff.

Table 7 on page 10 displays a comparison for the last three years of standards by Service Area and calendar year. Caseloads in the Central, Eastern, and Western Service Areas decreased and caseloads in the Northern and Southeast Service Areas increased from 2007 to 2008. From 2008 to 2009, caseloads in all Service Areas except for the Northern Service Area increased.

From 2009 to 2010, caseloads increased in the Central, Eastern, and Southeast Service Areas. The Southeast Service Area experienced the largest increase (31% per state standards and 28% per national standards). The average number of intake reports each month more than doubled in the area, the number of children that received services increased by 7.89%, and the number of staff that were available to provide service decreased 15.22%. The Eastern Service Area experienced the second highest increase in caseloads (17% per state and national standards). In this area, hotline coverage and placement calls increased by 59.80%, the number of children served increased by 7.67%, and the number of available staff decreased by 6.33%.

Caseloads in the Northern and Western Service Areas decreased. These two areas experienced a slight increase in staff. The increase in children who received services in the Northern Service Area was minimal (1.78%) and the number of children that received services in the Western Service Area decreased by 8.81%. All Service Areas remained above both state and national standards.

Table 7. Caseloads per Standards by Service Area and Calendar Year

Service Area	2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Nebraska Standards	CWLA Standards	Nebraska Standards	CWLA Standards	Nebraska Standards	CWLA Standards	Nebraska Standards	CWLA Standards
Central	115%	115%	106%	107%	129%	131%	138%	140%
Eastern	134%	137%	116%	118%	134%	139%	151%	156%
Northern	108%	106%	126%	121%	122%	119%	115%	112%
Southeast	115%	116%	126%	124%	168%	167%	199%	195%
Western	122%	121%	117%	115%	152%	146%	143%	140%
State	122%	122%	119%	118%	142%	143%	138%	140%

Attachment D provides more detailed information on the changes in caseload levels from 2009 to 2010 within each Service Area. It also displays changes in the number of hotline calls, intake reports, available staff, and children served, to provide a more meaningful context.

STAFF RESOURCES: As of December 31, 2010, there were 360.00 CFS staff assigned to carry out intake, initial assessment, and case management functions, which were factored into the determination of the caseload size. When compared to state and national caseload standards, the number of available CFS staff falls below those suggested in both standards. However, it should be noted that 210 contract staff were available to provide some of the caseload functions. Contractor staff numbers were not considered in CFS caseload comparisons. The information in Table 3 indicates that there would need to be at least 554.73 active staff to meet Nebraska standards and 558.04 active staff to meet CWLA standards. Attachment C provides this information by Service Area.

Please note that total FTE counts will always appear higher than the actual number of workers who are performing case management duties on any given day because FTE counts include staff in training and vacant positions. While there were 360.00 available workers in the workforce, there were actually 455.00 FTE positions authorized to carry out the work. The remaining FTE positions consisted of 12 staff in training and 83 vacant positions. While these positions did not factor into caseload size, they are important to note. Half (6 of 12) of the staff in training were in the Western Service Area. The majority (85.54%, n=71) of vacancies were allotted to the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas. If these positions were filled with active workers, the caseloads in these areas and throughout the state would have decreased but still fell above both state and national standards.

Table 9 on page 11 displays the amount of fiscal resources the Department would need to maintain active staff, staff in training, and filling vacant positions.

Table 9. Financial Staff Costs as of December 31, 2010

Authorized Positions	Average Salary per Staff	Average Benefits per Staff	Indirect Cost per Staff*	Total Cost per Staff	Total Costs
360 (DHHS Available Staff)	\$35,713	\$12,946	\$18,004	\$66,663	\$23,998,680
12 (DHHS Trainees)	\$29,723	\$ 10,775	\$14,984	\$55,482	\$665,784
83 (Total Vacancies)**	\$35,713	\$12,946	\$18,004	\$66,663	\$5,533,029
455 (Total Staff, Trainees, and Vacancies)					\$30,197,493

* Per staff indirect costs based on approved federal indirect rate of 37% of salaries and benefits.

**Vacancies if FTEs are fully funded.

Table 10 displays the amount of fiscal resources the Department would need to maintain a sufficient amount of staff to meet state and national standards.

Table 10. Financial Staff Costs per Standards as of December 31, 2010

Standard	Total Workers Needed	Average Salary per Worker	Average Benefits per Worker	Indirect Cost per Worker *	Total Cost per Worker	Total Costs
Nebraska Standards	442.17	\$35,713	\$12,946	\$18,004	\$66,663	\$29,476,379
CWLA Standards	452.38	\$35,713	\$12,946	\$18,004	\$66,663	\$30,157,008

* Per staff indirect costs based on costs used for staff in fiscal notes.

To examine employment trends, the Department maintains length of employment data by date of employment within child welfare/juvenile services and by date of employment in the worker's current position. Table 11 displays the median and average length of employment in years by position.

Table 11. Department Length of Employment in Years as of December 31 (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)

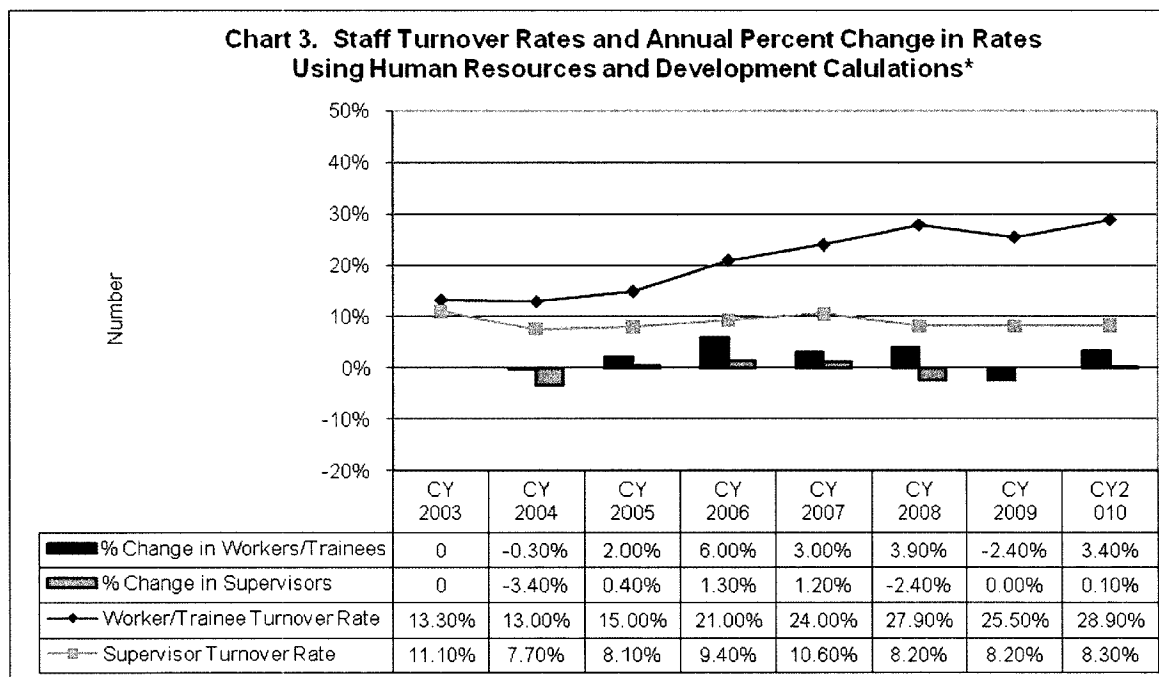
	2007				2008				2009				2010			
	CFS		Position		CFS		Position		CFS		Position		CFS		Position	
	Med	Ave	Med	Med	Ave	Med	Med	Ave	Med	Med	Ave	Med	Med	Ave	Med	Ave
Worker	3.5	6.7	3.0	5.5	3.3	6.0	2.3	4.9	2.5	5.6	1.9	4.5	3.0	6.1	2.6	4.8
Super	12.2	9.9	4.7	2.5	9.9	12.5	2.5	4.6	10.0	11.5	2.7	4.5	10.2	12.1	3.4	5.1

The median length of employment of workers and supervisors in child welfare/juvenile services and their specific positions increased in the last year. The median length of employment of workers in child welfare/juvenile services increased from 2.5 years in 2009 to 3.0 years in 2010. The median length of employment of workers in their current position increased from 4.5 years in 2009 to 4.8 years in 2010. The median length of employment of supervisors in child welfare/juvenile services increased from 10.0 years

in 2009 to 10.2 years in 2010. The median length of employment for supervisors in their current position increased from 4.5 years in 2008 to 5.1 years in 2010.

The Department's Human Resources and Development (HRD) calculates turnover rates among CFS workers and supervisors based on the number of workers who leave employment with the Department, divided by the number of authorized CFSSs and supervisors at the end of the year. Please note the turnover data for HRD includes APS workers. However, given that there are only 29 APS workers throughout the state, including them in the median and average length of employment values does not significantly impact HRD turnover rates.

After decreasing in 2009 for the first time in five years, turnover among workers/trainees increased 3.40% from 25.50% in 2009 to 28.90% in 2010. This was the highest worker turnover since 2003. The turnover rate for supervisors increased slightly (0.10%) from 8.20% in 2009 to 8.30% in 2010. This fell just below the average turnover rate for supervisors in the last seven years.



* HRD turnover rate calculations changed in Calendar Year 2006 and are now based on authorized FTE's rather than the active number of staff.

CFS also monitors turnover rates among workers and supervisors. CFS' calculations, however, capture additional measures of turnover that HRD does not capture. For example, there are instances in which workers move from one Service Area to another within child welfare or juvenile services, or workers move up to supervisory positions. This is one of the reasons why CFS analyzes length of employment in both the agency and current position, as indicated in Table 12. Some workers exit child welfare and juvenile services altogether, moving to other programs or divisions within the Department. While none of these examples involve the termination of agency employment as measured by HRD, they do result in a vacant position within child welfare and juvenile services. For this reason, CFS considers these additional

instances as employee turnover within the child welfare and juvenile services system and measures them as such.

To calculate CFS-specific turnover rates among workers and supervisors, CFS divides the number of employees who leave a position by the average number of employees who have held that position throughout the year. (Please note that the CFS measures worker turnover separately from turnover among trainees to more accurately analyze the impact of turnover among workers who are actively managing cases.)

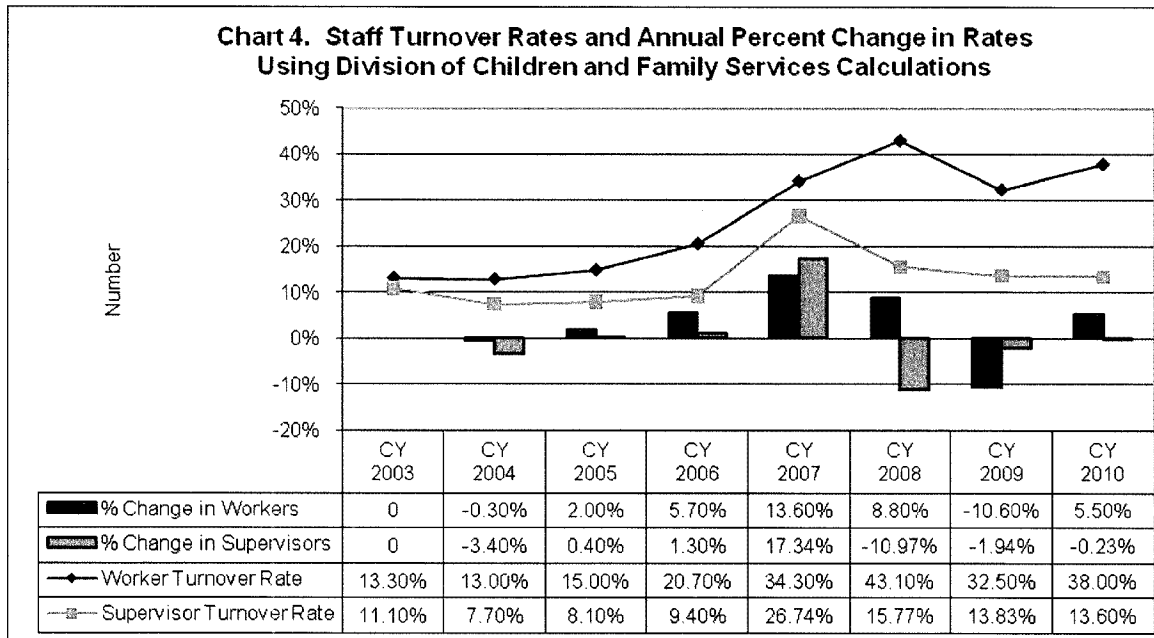
The HRD and CFS calculations included in this report may also differ from the way in which other states and entities measure turnover within their agencies. Like CFS, other state agencies may base their calculations on the unique ways in which their organizations are structured and how worker movement or turnover occurs within their organization (e.g., employee termination, transfers among positions, etc.). This makes it difficult to compare child welfare and juvenile service turnover among states and with national estimates. Nonetheless, comparisons indicate that the state is currently experiencing turnover at rates that are both higher and lower than some national estimates. According to one national report, the average turnover rate in states across the country is 22.1% for child welfare service workers and 11.8% for supervisors.⁵ However, other sources cite that a 20.0% annual turnover rate in child welfare service workers is fairly low.⁶ Yet another publication cited turnover rates ranging from 34.0% to 67.0% in states like Texas, Florida, and Wisconsin.⁷

Chart 4 on page 14 displays turnover rates and annual percent changes in rates from year to year using CFS calculations. The turnover rate for CFS workers in Nebraska increased 5.50% from 32.50% in 2009 to 38.00% in 2010. This is the second highest turnover rate (following 43.10% in 2008) in the last seven years. Turnover rates for supervisors decreased 0.23% from 13.83% in 2009 to 13.60% in 2010.

⁵ American Public Human Services Association. (2005). *Report from the 2004 Child Welfare Workforce Survey*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

⁶ Cornerstones for Kids. (2006). *Toward a High Quality Child Welfare Workforce: Six Doable Steps*. Houston, TX: Author.

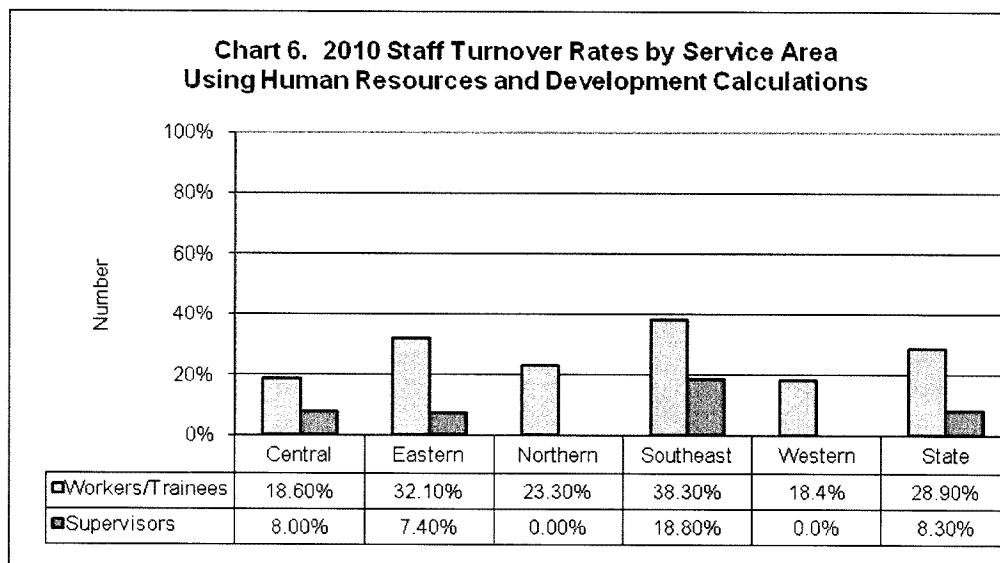
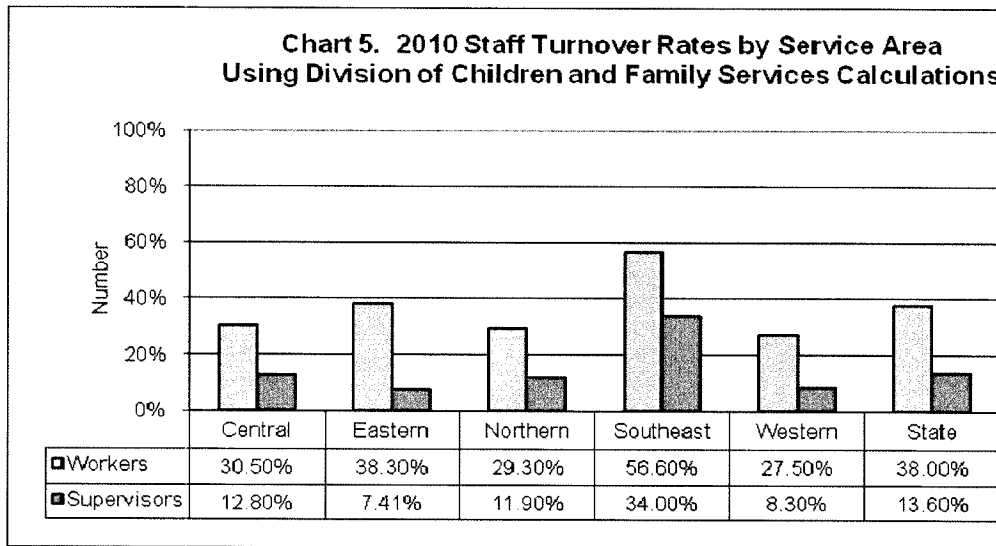
⁷ Riggs, D. "Workforce Issues Continue to Plague Child Welfare." *Adoptalk* Summer 2007. St. Paul, MN: North American Council on Adoptable Children. 01 February 2008 <http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/WorkforceIssues.html>.



Part of the increase in worker turnover can be attributed to the child welfare and juvenile services reform (Families Matter). Since its implementation in November 2009, there have been various changes made. One of these changes included a shift in the roles and responsibilities of CFS and Lead Contract staff in the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas, the areas with the two remaining contracts in place. This change was announced in the fall of 2010. Shortly thereafter, CFS staff were notified that there would be a reduction of 66 CFSS positions and 11 supervisory positions by January 3, 2011. In preparation for this change, some CFS staff began to pursue other employment options. For example, approximately 50 to 75 CFS employees from the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas attended a job fair on November 17, 2010, at which various agencies – including KVC and NFC – were represented. While we do not know the exact number of CFS employees who moved on to be employed at KVC, NFC, or other agencies as a result of the impending reductions, we do know that layoffs of CFS staff were not necessary due to the number of positions that had already become vacant before the January 3, 2011 effective date. In fact, only one staff in the Southeast Service Area was laid off because she was unable to relocate to another area of the state. It is also important to note that some CFS employees moved on to be employed by Lead Contractor agencies. Thus, while they were no longer employed by the Department, they remained working in the child welfare and juvenile services system as Lead Contractor staff.

Turnover is a more pressing issue in some Service Areas than others, particularly in the two areas in which Families Matter Lead Contracts are still in place. Chart 5 on page 15 displays 2010 staff turnover rates by Service Area as calculated by the CFS. Chart 6 on page 15 displays the same information using HRD calculations. The differences between the two give some indication as to whether staff left CFS (as measured in Chart 5) or terminated employment with the Department (as measured in Chart 6). For example, of the 38.00% of workers who left CFS, over one fifth moved elsewhere within the Department and the remainder terminated employment with the Department altogether. This occurred to some degree in all Service Areas with the exception of the

Eastern Service Area, in which the two turnover rates are nearly identical for supervisors (7.41% per CFS calculations and 7.40% per HRD calculations).



When comparing across the state, the Southeast Service Area had the highest worker turnover at 38.30% to 56.60% depending on which calculation you apply (i.e., HRD or CFS). This area has consistently been the area with the highest turnover rate in the last three years. The Eastern Service Area had the second highest worker turnover at 32.10% to 38.30% depending on the calculation applied. The Eastern Service Area has had the second highest turnover rate throughout the state in both 2007 and 2008, although the Western Service Area had the highest turnover rate in 2009. The remaining Service Areas ranged from 18.40% to 23.30% using HRD calculations, and 27.50% to 30.50% using CFS calculations.

Turnover among supervisors is also highest in the Southeast Service Area (18.80% per HRD calculations and 34.00% per CFS calculations), followed by the Central Service Area (8.00% per HRD calculations and 12.80% per CFS calculations). The Eastern

Service Area experienced turnover around 7.40% per both calculations, the Northern Service Area experienced turnover within CFS at 11.90% but 0% within the Department, and the Western Service Area experienced 8.30% turnover CFS but 0% turnover within the Department as a whole.

Over the past few years, CFS has taken some steps to reduce staff turnover rates. In 2007, we collaborated with the Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to conduct a study on staff retention. The study analyzed: survey responses from staff on factors that affect their decisions to leave or remain working in the division; data on worker performance, leave, and turnover rates; and staff feedback gathered at independently-facilitated focus groups conducted throughout the state to discuss how CFS can best support and develop staff. Staff training was one of the issues brought to light through these efforts.

Based on staff feedback, CFS implemented a new staff training program that includes core and specialized training based on new workers' casework assignments (e.g. intake, initial safety intervention, ongoing safety intervention, adoption, or juvenile service officers). This reduced new worker training from what was previously a six month period to less than two months. The new worker training model consists of a pre-service training period ranging from 25 to 47 days of classroom, lab and field training, followed by an additional 6.5 days of classroom training completed as a required in-service phase.

Training is evaluated using ratings and feedback obtained from trainees and supervisors in post-training surveys. Surveys include questions related to training content, delivery methods, overall training quality, and the extent to which trainees are prepared for the job upon completion of training. Responses are used to inform decisions about the training model.

Nebraska also uses the Competency Development Tool (CDT) to assess trainee's knowledge, skills, and abilities during the training period, to provide feedback to the employee on their performance, and to determine whether the employee is to be promoted from trainee to a worker under probationary status, and then later from probationary to permanent status. If employees do not meet minimum competency in each required performance dimension, they may be directed to attend additional training and development. This will increase employees' confidence in their ability to perform on the job as well as their actual ability to successfully carry out the duties involved in the job. In turn, this will decrease turnover.

Nebraska also used the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal during the hiring process for workers and supervisors. This instrument measures the extent to which an individual processes information, can make judgments, and can think critically through options and consequences. This tool assists us in predicting those individuals who are best suited for and who will be successful in these jobs.

TRAINING RESOURCES: Training for children and family services staff is provided through a contract with CCFL at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as by the Department's children and family services staff, the Department's HRD staff, and

external presenters. The Department has had a contract with CCFL to provide training for child welfare and juvenile services staff since 1988.

During 2010, a combined total of 5,823.25 hours of new worker training and in-service training for child, youth, and family services were delivered to CFS staff. Training is designed to prepare CFSSs and supervisors to provide child welfare and juvenile services in Nebraska and to support the ongoing refinement of skills and best practices needed to deliver these services.

Financial support for Department staff to attain a Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree or Master in Social Work degree is also available through the Department's tuition assistance program. Department offices in individual Service Areas also collaborate with local colleges and universities to provide opportunities for staff to participate in internship projects. There have also been instances in which the new worker training curriculum has been approved to serve as a component to undergraduate or graduate study, although payment must be made at that institution's tuition rate.

Below are descriptions of the different types of child welfare and juvenile services training offered by the Department to staff and the number of staff who received the training.

Children and Family Services New Worker Training: The Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Training Curriculum is provided to CFSSs and supervisors who are new to child welfare and juvenile services. This model of training consists of a combination of competency-based classroom lecture and discussions, labs, and on-the-job field training that are provided through core courses, specialized courses based on job assignment, and required in-service courses during the first year of employment.

The classroom component of the training is presented throughout the state in locations within as close proximity as possible to participants' local offices. If local training cannot occur, all efforts are made to utilize video/audio/Internet conferencing (i.e., distance learning) to eliminate or reduce the need for travel. During 2010, the utilization of distance learning was minimal, as local training was usually able to be coordinated for the majority of participants. The training model used in this component covers the following areas: general safety concepts; case management and supervision; safety assessments; case plans; service referrals; the placement of children and youth; case reviews; judicial determinations; data collection and reporting; adoption; and determination and re-determination of eligibility. Staff may also receive training on recognizing and intervening in child abuse and neglect and working with juvenile offenders, if relevant to their ultimate assignment.

The lab training component of the curriculum occurs individually or in small groups, and in a workplace environment or a community setting related to the workplace, in order to provide a realistic simulation of the subject matter. These lab experiences are facilitated by the CCFL Field Training Specialist.

On-the-job field training is a learning experience that takes place outside of the classroom. The on-the-job field training activities are always linked to classroom and lab training in order to maximize the learning environment. Field training allows

trainees to apply the knowledge they acquire in the training classroom to on-the-job situations, through observation, simulation, shadowing, and supervised practice.

One hundred eighty-seven (187) trainees were enrolled in the CFSS new worker training program in 2010. Please note that staff participating in training cross over years, so some staff were hired in 2009 but continued training in 2010 and some staff hired in 2010 will continue training in 2011.

The breakdown of trainees by employment in the agency is provided below:

- 185 CFS trainees; and
- 2 other attendees (e.g., Tribal workers, APS workers, and Department Quality Assurance staff).

Table 12 presents the total number of new worker training hours delivered in 2010.

Table 12. New Worker Training Hours for 2010 by Training Setting

Training Setting	Hours
Classroom and Lab Sessions	3,185.75
On-The-Job Field Training	2,469.00
All New Workers Training Settings	5,654.75

In-Service Training: CFS staff are required to participate in a minimum of 24 hours of supervisor-approved training annually. The number of training hours provided by CCFL, Department HRD staff, Central Office Program Specialists, and external presenters fluctuates annually and is based on the training needs identified by administration. Input on their own perceived training needs is sought from individual staff, as well as management in the Service Areas.

Table 13 presents the number of training hours delivered to staff by CCFL, Department staff, or other external presenters in 2010. Staff may also have obtained training through external entities, which sometimes is not reported to the central repository. For example, staff may participate in a two-hour webinar sponsored by a National Child Welfare Resource Center. These types of activities are considered training and many times go unreported.

Table 13. In-Service Training Hours for 2010 by Training Delivery

Training Delivery	Hours
Delivered by CCFL Staff	168.50
Delivered by Department Staff or External Presenters	860.25
Delivered by Other Presenters	288.75
All Types of Service Delivery	1,317.50

The Department and CCFL also provide training to Lead Contract staff. Table 14 on page 19 displays the number of hours CCFL and the Department provided to Lead Contract staff by service delivery.

Table 14. Contractor Training Hours for 2010 by Training Delivery

Training Delivery	Hours
Delivered by CCFL Staff	574.50
Delivered by Department Staff	3,108.50
All Types of Service Delivery	3,683.00

In addition to providing direct training to contract staff, CCFL and the Department both work closely with the Lead Contractors to develop training that the agencies can provide internally. CCFL, DHHS, and contract agencies have created a committee designed to identify and develop training plans for both CFS and contract staff. Additionally, both contract agencies have borrowed and adapted training curricula, materials, and resources that CCFL uses to train CFS staff to train their own staff. Each contractor has added to this material information relevant to their own agencies and staff. In addition to the CCFL training content, Lead Contractors have trained their staff on topics such as the NSIS, structured decision making, roles and responsibilities, court and legal issues, placement documentation, and general case management practices.

Table 15 displays the Department's total cost of the training provided by CCFL and the Department's HRD staff in SFY2010. The information presented includes travel expenses, training site square footage, equipment, development time, materials, evaluation and assessment time, distance learning expenses, and presenters' salary. CCFL provides a 25% match required to access Federal Title IV-E funds for the training, as indicated in the table below.

Table 15. Financial Training Costs for SFY2010

	Costs
Department Costs for CCFL Services	\$2,226,911
CCFL Contribution	\$775,358
CFS Staff Costs While in Training	\$4,732,226
Total Training Costs	\$7,734,495

It should also be noted that the State of Nebraska receives federal funds, under Title IV-E, to train new caseworkers on foster care-related issues.

CONTRACTOR CASELOAD RATIOS AND STAFF RESOURCES:

Prior to being selected as a Lead Contractor, each bidding agency submitted to the Department a program description outlining how they would coordinate and deliver services. According to its program description, Nebraska Families Collaborative proposed an average caseload of 12 to 20 cases, or approximately 17 cases at any given time. KVC proposed a staffing ratio of 1 worker to 16 families in both the Eastern and Southeast Service Area. Both of these ratios are similar to the Nebraska and CWLA standards, which recommend anywhere from 14 to 17 families or 12 to 20 children per worker, depending on the service being provided (i.e., in-home, out-of-home, out-of-home long-term).

Table 16 on page 20 displays the number of Lead Contractor staff who were available to carry out service coordination and delivery, the number of workers in training, the number of vacant positions, and the total number of positions dedicated to carrying out the work as of December 31, 2010.

Table 16. Contractor Staff as of December 31, 2010

Agency	Total Workers Available	Total Workers in Training	Total Vacancies	Total FTE Positions
KVC-Eastern Service Area	54	0	3	57
Nebraska Families Collaborative	45.5	0	1	46.5
KVC-Southeast Service Area	110	0	3	113

A simple calculation, dividing the number of cases assigned to each contractor as of December 31, 2010 by the number of available workers and the number of full-time employment (FTE) positions indicates that the Lead Contractors were working within their proposed caseload ratio and the caseload ratios outlined in the Nebraska and CWLA standards. Please see Table 17.

Table 17. Contractor Worker: Case Ratio as of December 31, 2010

Agency	Total Cases	Total Workers Available	Available Worker to Case Ratio	Total FTE Positions	FTE to Case Ratio
KVC-Eastern Service Area	597	54	1:11	57	1:10
Nebraska Families Collaborative	578	45.5	1:13	46.5	1:12
KVC-Southeast Service Area	1,371	110	1:12	113	1:12

Lead Contractors also maintain length of employment data. The data is based on the fourteen months for which contracts were in effect (i.e., November 2009 through December 2010). For this reason, data for previous years is not available and does not apply. Table 18 displays contractors' average length of employment in months as of December 31, 2010.

Table 18. Lead Contractors' Length of Employment in Months as of December 31, 2010

	KVC – ESA	KVC – SESA	NFC
Worker	9.59	7.12	11.61
Supervisor	13.41	9.42	13.25

DEPARTMENT OUTCOMES: 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 serve more children in their own homes, to reduce the number of children and youth coming into state custody, and to provide for community safety. In 2010, CFS discharged 3,844 children and youth from state care into some form of permanency with the majority (68.8%) being reunified with parents (refer to Table 19 on page 21).

Table 19. Youth Exiting State Legal Custody During Calendar Year 2010 by Outcome

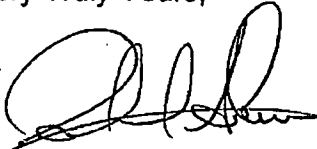
	Reunification	Adoption	Guardianship	Independent Living	Other Reason*	Total
Central Service Area	296 63%	62 13%	41 9%	46 10%	26 6%	471 100%
Eastern Service Area	1,023 69%	140 9%	92 6%	143 10%	84 6%	1,482 100%
Northern Service Area	286 73%	28 7%	37 9%	25 6%	16 4%	392 100%
Southeast Service Area	715 68%	132 13%	64 6%	126 12%	19 2%	1,056 100%
Western Service Area	323 73%	36 8%	29 7%	28 6%	27 6%	443 100%
State	2,643 69%	398 10%	263 7%	368 10%	172 4%	3,844 100%

* Other reasons are transfer to another agency, runaway and death.

This concludes the Department's 2010 annual report on child welfare/juvenile services caseload levels. The Department appreciates the opportunity to share this information each year and welcomes continued review by the Legislature and the public.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very Truly Yours,



Scot L. Adams, Ph.D.,
Interim Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Attachments.