



CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD MODEL

Report to the Legislature – March 2023



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Executive Summary

[RCW 43.216.750](#) requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to submit a report to relevant committees of the Legislature on a workload model including standardized ratios for child welfare workers. The statute required the department to convene a technical workgroup to develop the workload model in 2019 and issue a report. It also requires that the technical workgroup continue to meet annually and issue a report. DCYF convened the technical workgroup and released reports in 2019 and 2020. DCYF reconvened a technical workgroup in 2021 to review and modify the previous workload model developed in 2020.

Subsequently, [Senate Bill 5693](#) Sec. 227 (34) (2022 supplemental budget) required the department to contract for a new child welfare workload study, which must include the workload impacts required by recent state and federal law. This study is also required to make recommendations for staffing models and system improvements. Under this budget proviso, the department is also required to convene a steering committee, the composition of which closely mirrors the technical workgroup required under RCW 43.216.750.

DCYF began convening the steering committee required by SB 5693 in 2022. The agency chose not to reconvene the technical workgroup required under RCW 43.216.750 in 2022 in order to avoid confusion and repetition of the same work. DCYF believes that because of the similarity in the composition of the two groups, convening the steering committee required under proviso satisfies the statutory requirement to convene the technical work group under RCW 43.216.750.

This report updates the workload model and standardized ratios as required under RCW 43.216.750. The department plans to release an updated workload model and recommendations by June, 30 2023 as required by the 2022 supplemental budget.

Introduction

Child welfare caseloads are calculated using a workload methodology that applies different weighting based on the type of case. The method also accounts for workers who carry a mix of different case types. This report includes:

- Summary trends in workload for Child Protective Services (CPS) and Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS).
- The October 3, 2022 Workload Report for the state and all regions.
- An explanation of the methodology for calculating the weighted caseload.

Case Weighting

Child welfare cases are weighted to account for the difference in the workload associated with different case types. An example of differently weighted cases includes Indian Child Welfare (ICW). For ICW cases under state jurisdiction, DCYF gives a weight of 1.3, as these cases require an average of 30% more time to complete the additional requirements needed to comply with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (1974) and the Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act (2011). This case weighting is now being re-evaluated, given recent court decisions involving ICW cases, with a case weighting of 1.7 being proposed for a final decision. In addition, these court decisions will also significantly increase the number of cases considered ICW. The

pending workload study is expected to provide information to inform this proposal). Whereas tribal jurisdiction cases¹ open for payment only have no active case management requirements with DCYF, they are therefore only counted as .36 of a case. Case weighting is detailed in Appendix A.

Workload Report Elements

The Workload Report provides DCYF with official counts of average weighted caseloads for each child welfare program area. The report displays five elements:

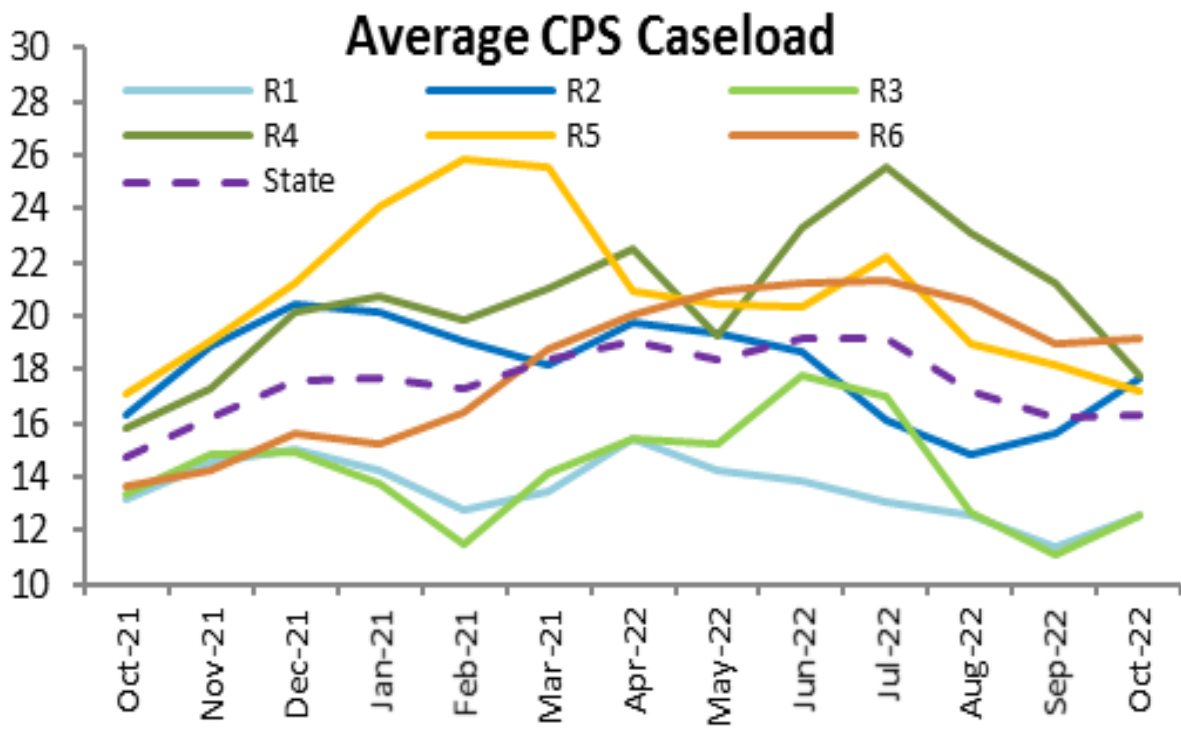
1. **Program Area** represents a general category of case assignments counted by the report. Sections include all workers and count in the following program areas:
 - CFWS.
 - CPS Investigation.
 - CPS Family Assessment Response (CPS-FAR).
 - Family Reconciliation Services (FRS).
 - Family Voluntary Services (FVS).
 - Home Study.
2. **Cases** represent weighted counts of intakes, children, cases, or providers, as shown in Appendix A.
3. **Worker %** represents the sum of all the portions of case-carrying caseworkers with assignments in each program area.
 - This allows DCYF to account for mixed caseloads without inflating the number of workers available in a program area.
 - For example, if 25% of a worker's cases are CPS and 75% are CFWS, then .25 of the worker counts as a CPS worker % and .75 of the worker counts as a CFWS worker %.
4. **Worker Detail** represents the count of caseworkers (i.e., people), with some portion of their work being counted in each program area.
 - This is the number of actual people with case assignments in the program area.
 - This number will always be larger than the Worker % in each program area.
5. **Ratio** represents the average number of weighted cases assigned to a worker in that program. DCYF divides cases by worker % within each program area to determine the ratio.

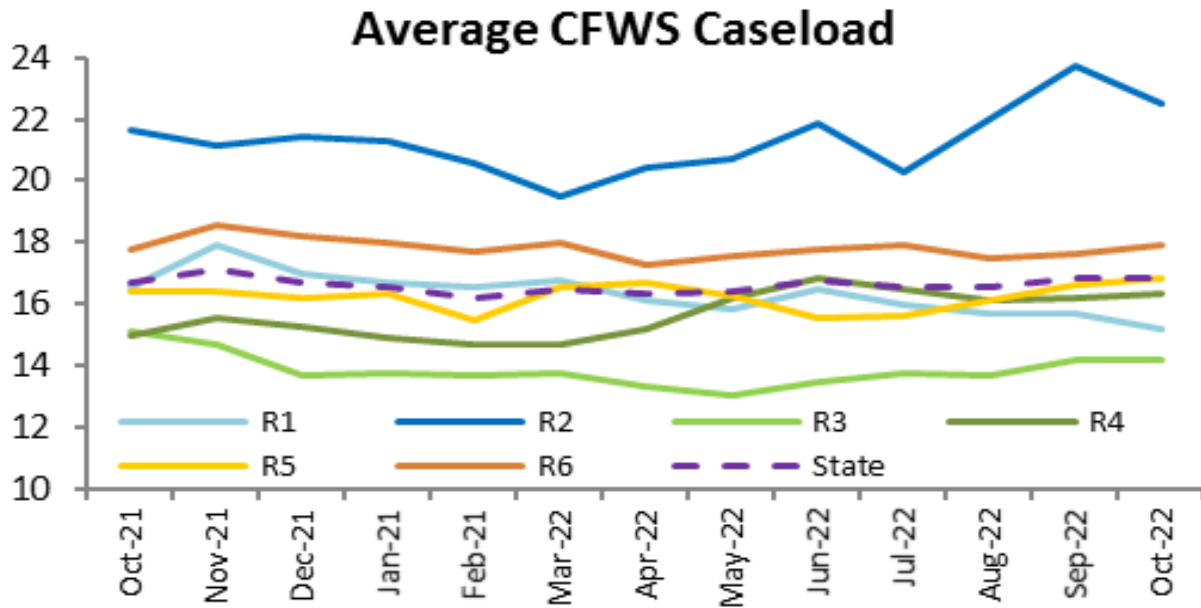
Additional business rules for calculating child welfare workload are detailed in Appendix B.

Average Caseload and Regional Summary

DCYF calculates child welfare caseloads using the workload weighting methodology described in Appendix A. DCYF administrators and leadership monitor state and regional trends to address workload distribution across and within programs. DCYF uses this information to identify staffing needs.

¹ Those cases where a Washington state federally-recognized tribe provides case management.





State Summary by Region

		Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	All
October 3, 2022								
All Workers	Ratio	13.6	18.8	12.5	15.7	16.0	17.4	15.6
	Cases	2,790.16	2,214.78	1,831.60	2,784.46	2,759.35	3,963.98	16,344.33
	Worker %	205.0	118.0	146.0	177.0	173.0	228.0	1,047.0
	Worker Detail	205	118	146	177	173	228	1047
CFWS Workers	Ratio	15.2	22.5	14.2	16.3	16.9	17.9	16.8
	Cases	1,595.66	1,032.88	904.70	1,408.96	1,450.05	1,896.38	8,288.63
	Worker %	105.2	46.0	63.8	86.3	86.0	105.38	493.1
	Worker Detail	112	53	67	91	92	114	529
CPS Investigation	Ratio	12.2	18.1	13.1	19.7	18.2	20.4	16.9
	Cases	500.6	617.70	386.80	599.80	526.70	863.70	3,495.30
	Worker %	41.0	34.2	29.5	30.5	29.0	42.3	206.4
	Worker Detail	73	53	61	61	60	86	394
CPS FAR	Ratio	13.0	16.9	12.0	16.1	16.3	18.0	15.5
	Cases	449.40	316.10	308.70	529.60	463.30	826.20	2,893.30
	Worker %	34.7	18.8	25.7	32.9	28.5	45.8	186.3
	Worker Detail	54	36	60	64	58	84	356
FRS Workers	Ratio	12.9	21.2	13.1	16.9	14.4	19.2	16.3
	Cases	38.90	40.20	38.20	56.10	65.60	114.10	353.10

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	Worker %	3.0	1.9	2.9	3.3	4.6	5.9	21.6
	Worker Detail	12	10	9	9	9	20	69
FVS Workers	Ratio	9.1	14.3	11.9	13.4	12.7	16.9	13.0
	Cases	54.60	126.90	96.20	87.00	80.70	82.60	528.00
	Worker %	6.0	8.9	8.1	6.5	6.4	4.9	40.8
	Worker Detail	15	18	15	13	13	28	102
Homestudy Workers	Ratio	10.0	9.7	6.1	5.9	9.3	7.8	8.0
	Cases	151.00	81.00	97.00	103.00	173.00	181.00	786.00
	Worker %	15.1	8.3	16.0	17.5	18.6	23.3	98.8
	Worker Detail	17	12	16	22	27	29	123

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Region 1 Summary by Office

Region 1	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Regional Ratio	15.2	12.2	13.0	12.9	9.1	10.0	13.6
Cases	1595.66	500.60	449.40	38.90	54.60	151.00	2,790.16
Worker %	105.2	41.0	34.7	3.0	6.0	15.1	205.0
Workers	112	73	54	12	15	17	205
Clarkston Ratio	8.4	33.2	19.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.6
Cases	25.30	36.50	37.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	99.30
Worker %	3.0	1.1	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0
Workers	3	2	3	0	0	0	6
Colfax Ratio	12.5	22.0	21.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.3
Cases	36.55	20.90	24.20	0.00	0.0	0.00	81.65
Worker %	2.9	1.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Workers	4	2	3	0	0	0	5
Colville Ratio	14.3	9.6	9.9	11.7	14.3	0.0	12.1
Cases	56.05	18.80	14.90	6.30	1.00	0.00	97.05
Worker %	3.9	2.0	1.5	0.5	0.1	0.0	8.0
Workers	4	4	4	2	1	0	8
Lincoln County Ratio	10.8	10.7	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.8
Cases	2.15	3.00	5.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.75
Worker %	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Workers	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Moses Lake Ratio	19.4	11.3	18.3	14.3	11.7	0.0	16.3
Cases	162.90	60.70	76.70	7.00	18.20	0.00	325.50
Worker %	8.4	5.4	4.2	0.5	1.6	0.0	20.0
Workers	10	13	6	2	4	0	20
Newport Ratio	14.0	15.0	16.5	8.7	20.0	0.0	14.1
Cases	53.50	6.30	7.90	2.00	1.00	0.00	70.70
Worker %	3.8	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.0	5.0
Workers	5	2	3	1	1	0	5
Omak Ratio	17.9	9.4	9.3	18.2	18.6	0.0	14.3
Cases	68.38	14.20	13.90	2.00	1.30	0.00	99.78
Worker %	3.8	1.5	1.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	7.0
Workers	4	3	3	1	1	0	7

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Region 1	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Out of Home Licensing Ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.9	9.9
Cases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	149.00	149.00
Worker %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
Workers	0	0	0	0	0	15	15
Spokane Central Ratio	15.6	10.4	12.9	15.3	9.1	0.0	13.4
Cases	223.05	89.10	65.40	15.30	10.20	0.00	403.05
Worker %	14.3	8.5	5.1	1.0	1.1	0.0	30.0
Workers	15	14	7	1	2	0	30
Spokane ICW Ratio	13.5	11.8	4.7	9.3	4.9	0.0	11.8
Cases	147.26	39.50	9.80	1.30	2.60	0.00	200.46
Worker %	10.9	3.4	2.1	0.1	0.5	0.0	17.0
Workers	11	5	4	1	1	0	17
Spokane North Ratio	12.3	13.2	13.3	12.0	6.2	0.0	12.3
Cases	183.95	86.20	84.90	3.00	11.30	0.00	369.35
Worker %	15.0	6.6	6.4	0.3	1.8	0.0	30.0
Workers	15	11	7	2	2	0	30
Spokane Valley Ratio	16.8	9.2	6.5	5.0	0.0	25.0	12.5
Cases	250.30	65.50	43.30	1.00	0.00	1.00	361.10
Worker %	14.9	7.2	6.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	29.0
Workers	15	9	7	1	0	1	29
Wenatchee Ratio	15.6	15.8	20.3	16.7	11.4	0.0	16.5
Cases	133.02	59.90	65.30	1.00	5.00	0.00	264.22
Worker %	8.5	3.8	3.2	0.1	0.4	0.0	16.0
Workers	9	7	6	1	2	0	16

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Region 2 Summary by Office

Region 2	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Regional Ratio	22.5	18.1	16.9	21.2	14.3	9.7	18.8
Cases	1,032.88	617.70	316.10	40.20	126.90	81.00	2,214.78
Worker %	46.0	34.2	18.8	1.9	8.9	8.3	118.0
Workers	53	53	36	10	18	12	118
Ellensburg Ratio	16.5	14.2	11.4	12.5	15.5	0.0	14.8
Cases	45.00	28.80	13.60	1.00	15.20	0.00	103.60
Worker %	2.7	2.0	1.2	0.1	1.0	0.0	7.0
Workers	3	4	4	1	3	0	7
Goldendale Ratio	16.7	13.9	17.3	16.7	18.8	0.0	16.4
Cases	30.55	11.00	18.20	3.00	3.00	0.00	65.75
Worker %	1.8	0.8	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	4.0
Workers	3	3	2	3	2	0	4
Region 2 Adoptions Ratio	17.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.8	16.9
Cases	114.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	118.35
Worker %	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	7.0
Workers	7	0	0	0	0	3	7
Region 2 Office Ratio	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Cases	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Worker %	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Workers	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Out of Home Licensing Ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5	9.5
Cases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	76.00	76.00
Worker %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	8.0
Workers	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Sunnyside Ratio	15.7	23.3	21.6	13.8	0.0	0.0	18.7
Cases	58.25	47.10	21.20	4.00	0.00	0.00	130.55
Worker %	3.7	2.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	7.0
Workers	4	3	3	1	0	0	7
Toppenish Ratio	24.5	16.6	16.8	43.3	25.8	25.0	20.3
Cases	114.95	59.80	40.20	1.30	6.20	1.00	223.45
Worker %	4.7	3.6	2.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	11.0
Workers	5	6	6	1	1	1	11
Tri-Cities Ratio	25.3	21.1	14.5	24.6	12.1	0.0	21.0
Cases	370.38	220.50	80.80	23.90	40.50	0.00	736.08

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Region 2	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Workers	20	18	12	1	4	0	27
Walla Walla Ratio	21.7	11.0	32.3	28.6	13.5	0.0	19.9
Cases	104.75	33.90	62.40	4.00	14.00	0.00	219.05
Worker %	4.8	3.1	1.9	0.1	1.0	0.0	11.0
Workers	5	4	2	1	2	0	11
White Salmon Ratio	9.1	9.3	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	9.1
Cases	5.80	1.30	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	9.10
Worker %	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.0
Workers	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Yakima Ratio	28.5	19.3	14.1	13.6	15.3	0.0	20.0
Cases	194.65	215.60	79.70	3.00	48.00	0.00	540.95
Worker %	6.8	11.2	5.6	0.2	3.1	0.0	27.0
Workers	8	18	12	1	4	0	27

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Region 3 Summary by Office

Region 3	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Regional Ratio	14.2	13.1	12.0	13.1	11.9	6.1	12.5
Cases	904.70	386.80	308.70	38.20	96.20	97.00	1,831.60
Worker %	63.8	29.5	25.7	2.9	8.1	16.0	146.0
Workers	67	61	60	9	15	16	146
Bellingham Ratio	18.6	14.5	14.3	12.9	14.4	0.0	15.9
Cases	149.55	83.00	66.20	16.30	19.60	0.00	334.65
Worker %	8.0	5.7	4.6	1.3	1.4	0.0	21.0
Workers	9	12	12	3	3	0	21
Everett Ratio	12.5	11.4	9.7	7.4	10.6	0.0	11.3
Cases	112.00	58.00	50.40	4.30	23.30	0.00	248.00
Worker %	8.9	5.1	5.2	0.6	2.2	0.0	22.0
Workers	9	11	10	2	3	0	22
Friday Harbor Ratio	9.3	0.0	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.3
Cases	5.30	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.30
Worker %	.6	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Workers	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Lynnwood Ratio	17.3	12.0	14.8	18.2	16.5	0.0	14.6
Cases	48.20	47.10	49.50	4.00	11.90	0.00	160.70
Worker %	2.8	3.9	3.4	0.2	0.7	0.0	11.0
Workers	3	8	7	1	1	0	11
Mount Vernon Ratio	16.9	12.5	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.5
Cases	76.10	45.60	39.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	161.50
Worker %	4.5	3.7	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0
Workers	5	9	9	0	0	0	12
Oak Harbor Ratio	19.9	10.6	10.9	0.0	12.2	0.0	14.0
Cases	39.85	16.60	18.30	0.00	9.30	0.00	84.05
Worker %	2.0	1.6	1.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	6.0
Workers	2	3	4	0	1	0	6
Region 3 Adoptions Ratio	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.2
Cases	302.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	302.90
Worker %	23.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.0
Workers	23	0	0	0	0	0	23

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Region 3	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Region 3 Office Ratio	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8
Cases	1.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.80
Worker %	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Workers	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Region 3 Out-of-Home Licensing Ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	6.1
Cases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	97.00	97.00
Worker %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.0	16.0
Workers	0	0	0	0	0	16	16
Sky Valley Ratio	13.6	15.5	16.1	16.2	15.3	0.0	14.7
Cases	77.35	67.80	24.30	6.30	15.60	0.0	191.35
Worker %	5.7	4.4	1.5	0.4	1.0	0.0	13.0
Workers	6	7	7	2	5	0	13
Smokey Point Ratio	12.6	13.2	11.1	15.9	8.3	0.0	12.0
Cases	91.65	68.70	56.20	7.30	16.50	0.00	240.35
Worker %	7.3	5.2	5.1	0.5	2.0	0.0	20.0
Workers	8	11	10	1	2	0	20

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Region 4 Summary by Office

Region 4	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Regional Ratio	16.3	19.7	16.1	16.9	13.4	5.9	15.7
Cases	1,408.96	599.80	529.60	56.10	87.00	103.00	2,784.46
Worker %	86.3	30.5	32.9	3.3	6.5	17.5	177.0
Workers	91	61	64	9	13	22	177
King Central Services Ratio	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Cases	.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36
Worker %	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Workers	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
King East Ratio	15.0	13.3	12.8	7.6	17.2	0.0	13.7
Cases	152.65	89.30	112.20	9.30	18.90	0.00	382.35
Worker %	10.2	6.7	8.8	1.2	1.1	0.0	28.0
Workers	11	14	15	2	2	0	28
King South-East Ratio	16.3	25.5	22.4	20.0	11.0	8.1	19.0
Cases	189.40	117.20	108.20	3.00	15.30	3.00	436.10
Worker %	11.7	4.6	4.8	0.2	1.4	0.4	23.0
Workers	12	8	7	1	3	3	23
King South-West Ratio	21.1	23.4	17.3	28.6	15.0	4.8	19.7
Cases	226.15	98.80	66.80	2.00	15.60	5.00	414.35
Worker %	10.7	4.2	3.9	0.1	1.0	1.1	21.0
Workers	11	7	7	1	2	2	21
King West Ratio	15.0	11.0	12.0	25.1	6.3	0.0	13.4
Cases	143.40	52.90	57.80	20.30	6.30	0.00	280.70
Worker %	9.6	4.8	4.8	0.8	1.0	0.0	21.0
Workers	11	10	11	2	1	0	21
Martin Luther King Jr. Ratio	17.3	29.8	18.9	20.1	16.4	16.7	20.2
Cases	250.70	175.60	136.60	20.50	21.60	1.00	606.00
Worker %	14.5	5.9	7.2	1.0	1.3	0.1	30.0
Workers	16	13	15	2	2	1	30
Office of Indian Child Welfare Ratio	14.9	12.3	12.1	0.0	13.1	0.0	13.8
Cases	117.60	34.70	33.90	0.00	6.30	0.00	192.50
Worker %	7.9	2.8	2.8	0.0	0.5	0.0	14.0
Worker	8	7	6	0	2	0	14

CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD MODEL ANNUAL REPORT

Region 4	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Adoptions Ratio	15.5	0.0	18.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.5
Cases	214.40	0.00	2.6460	0.00	0.00	2.00	217.00
Worker %	13.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.0
Workers	14	0	1	0	0	0	14
Family Treatment Court Ratio	14.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.4
Cases	72.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	72.10
Worker %	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Workers	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Out of Home Licensing Ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	5.9
Cases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	94.00	94.00
Worker %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.0	16.0
Workers	0	0	0	0	0	16	16
West Seattle Ratio	21.5	22.5	26.1	25.0	18.8	0.0	22.3
Cases	42.20	31.30	11.50	1.00	3.00	0.00	89.00
Worker %	2.0	1.4	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	4.0
Workers	2	2	2	1	1	0	4

CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD MODEL ANNUAL REPORT

Region 5 Summary by Office

Region 5	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Regional Ratio	16.9	18.2	16.3	14.4	12.7	9.3	16.0
Cases	1,450.05	526.70	463.30	65.60	80.70	173.00	2,759.35
Worker %	86.0	29.0	28.5	4.6	6.4	18.6	173.0
Workers	92	60	58	9	13	27	173
Bremerton Ratio	10.7	26.5	18.2	27.1	7.5	0.0	15.0
Cases	165.50	126.90	101.70	22.20	17.30	0.00	433.60
Worker %	15.5	4.8	5.6	0.8	2.3	0.0	29.0
Workers	18	10	11	1	5	0	29
Lakewood Ratio	12.7	21.2	15.6	13.9	16.3	12.5	15.2
Cases	163.35	106.30	86.70	10.30	14.50	1.00	391.15
Worker %	12.7	5.0	5.5	0.7	0.9	0.1	25.0
Workers	13	10	13	1	2	1	25
Parkland (Satellite) Ratio	20.9	22.8	26.8	20.1	14.7	25.0	22.4
Cases	231.01	127.70	142.10	18.50	15.30	2.00	536.61
Worker %	11.1	5.6	5.3	0.9	1.0	0.1	24.0
Workers	12	10	10	2	2	2	24
Puyallup Ratio	16.0	12.9	12.9	3.3	9.0	0.0	14.4
Cases	230.85	64.90	69.40	1.00	8.00	0.00	374.15
Worker %	14.4	5.0	5.4	0.3	0.9	0.0	26.0
Workers	15	13	11	1	1	0	26
Region 5 Adoptions Ratio	14.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	14.0
Cases	122.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	125.90
Worker %	8.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	9.0
Workers	9	0	0	0	0	3	9
Region 5 Office Ratio	22.2	2.8	3.4	0.0	0.0	22.2	19.7
Cases	287.20	2.30	4.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	295.50
Worker %	12.9	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	15.0
Workers	13	2	2	0	0	2	158

CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD MODEL ANNUAL REPORT

Region 5	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Out of Home Licensing Ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1
Cases	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	164.00	164.00
Worker %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.0	18.0
Workers	0	0	0	0	0	18	18
Tacoma Ratio	23.4	12.7	10.9	7.6	20.5	20.0	16.6
Cases	250.24	98.60	59.40	13.60	25.60	1.00	448.44
Worker %	10.7	7.8	5.5	1.8	1.3	0.1	27.0
Workers	12	15	11	4	3	1	27

Region 6 Summary by Office

Region 6	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Regional Ratio	17.9	20.4	18.0	19.2	16.9	7.8	17.4
Cases	1,896.38	863.70	826.20	114.10	82.60	181.00	3,963.98
Worker %	105.8	42.3	45.8	5.9	4.9	23.3	228.0
Workers	114	86	84	20	28	29	228
Aberdeen Ratio	19.2	13.9	16.4	33.3	17.6	0.0	17.6
Cases	189.14	56.90	27.90	1.00	6.00	0.00	280.94
Worker %	9.9	4.1	1.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	16.0
Workers	10	6	3	1	3	0	16
Centralia Ratio	16.0	21.0	18.6	19.9	23.3	0.0	18.2
Cases	111.87	76.30	73.90	19.90	9.30	0.00	291.27
Worker %	7.0	3.6	4.0	1.0	0.4	0.0	16.0
Workers	7	8	8	1	2	0	16
Forks Ratio	20.1	21.7	14.8	0.0	18.2	0.0	19.2
Cases	30.12	1.30	4.90	0.00	2.00	0.00	38.32
Worker %	1.5	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	2.0
Workers	2	1	1	0	2	0	2
Kelso Ratio	17.3	39.8	27.6	31.7	14.3	0.0	24.7
Cases	208.25	179.30	205.60	16.80	6.30	0.00	616.25
Worker %	12.1	4.5	7.5	0.5	0.4	0.0	25.0
Workers	13	9	12	2	4	0	25
Long Beach Ratio	14.3	11.4	11.3	0.0	0.0	14.3	12.8
Cases	20.00	5.60	11.90	0.00	0.00	1.00	38.50

CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD MODEL ANNUAL REPORT

Worker %	1.4	0.5	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	3.0
Workers	2	2	2	0	0	1	3
Olympia (Tumwater) Ratio	22.4	17.5	16.9	19.0	18.3	0.0	19.4
Cases	324.95	150.40	172.90	20.30	28.50	0.00	697.05
Worker %	14.5	8.6	10.3	1.1	1.6	0.0	36.0
Workers	15	15	17	4	4	0	36
Port Angeles Ratio	18.4	12.8	10.7	18.8	18.7	20.0	15.7
Cases	102.45	23.50	23.20	3.00	4.30	1.00	157.45
Worker %	5.6	1.8	2.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	10.0
Workers	6	3	4	1	1	1	10

Region 6	CFWS	CPS INV	CPS FAR	FRS	FVS	Homestudy	All
Oct. 3, 2022							
Port Townsend Ratio	14.8	14.2	14.8	14.3	13.5	0.0	14.5
Cases	25.55	14.60	9.30	6.30	2.30	0.00	58.05
Worker %	1.7	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	4.0
Workers	3	4	2	3	2	0	4
Region 6 Adoptions Ratio	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	16.0
Cases	175.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	176.36
Worker %	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	11.0
Workers	11	0	0	0	0	1	11
Region 6 Centralized Services	3.8	2.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1
Cases	3.80	1.00	1.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.10
Worker %	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Workers	1	1	1	0	0	0	2
Region 6 Out of Home Licensing Ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.6	7.6
Cases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	175.00	175.300
Worker %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.0	23.0
Workers	0	0	0	0	0	23	23
Shelton Ratio	21.2	13.7	12.9	7.4	7.4	20.0	17.6
Cases	168.90	41.10	31.50	2.00	2.00	1.00	246.50
Worker %	8.0	3.0	2.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	14.0
Workers	8	6	6	1	1	1	14
South Bend Ratio	8.4	9.5	7.8	0.0	9.1	0.0	8.5
Cases	8.10	3.60	4.30	0.00	1.00	0.00	17.00
Worker %	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	2.0
Workers	2	1	2	0	1	0	2

CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD MODEL ANNUAL REPORT

Stevenson Ratio	22.2	26.4	22.4	25.0	23.1	0.0	23.3
Cases	22.85	16.90	24.20	3.00	3.00	0.00	69.95
Worker %	1.0	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	3.0
Workers	3	3	3	2	2	0	3
Vancouver - Cascade Ratio	13.2	16.5	14.3	9.8	16.7	0.0	14.0
Cases	131.80	63.40	59.10	9.00	3.00	0.00	266.30
Worker %	10.0	3.8	4.1	0.9	0.2	0.0	19.0
Workers	10	8	8	2	2	0	19
Vancouver – Clark Ratio	14.4	16.4	10.3	21.3	14.5	16.7	14.3
Cases	155.70	88.60	49.80	20.20	12.90	2.00	329.20
Worker %	10.8	5.4	4.8	1.0	0.9	0.1	23.0
Workers	11	10	7	1	2	2	23
Vancouver – Columbia Ratio	23.1	32.2	27.1	29.3	22.2	0.0	26.3
Cases	217.55	141.20	126.40	12.60	2.00	0.00	499.75
Worker %	9.4	4.4	4.7	0.4	0.1	0.0	19.0
Workers	10	9	8	2	2	0	19

Current Caseloads

Caseload size rose in 2022 as compared to 2021. Overall, child welfare caseloads across program areas have increased by 4% since the 2021 workload report and 7.7% since the 2020 workload report. The largest caseload increase has been in the CPS programs. CPS investigation caseloads have risen 8.33% in the last year and 34% from the same time in 2020, with CPS-FAR caseloads increasing 12.3% in the last year and 41% from the year 2020. However, this is a function of how the workload report includes staff and caseload. Only Social Service Specialists 2 or 3 staff who are assigned at least one case are counted in the averaging of the caseload size. Due to staff turnover resulting in vacancies, the caseload size per worker has increased, solely due to a reduced number of staff working in these cases. There are 661.12 fewer cases in 2022 when compared to 2021, representing a 3.89% decrease in the total number of open cases. However, the statewide caseload size is higher than last year because there are fewer active workers carrying these cases. The statewide caseload is 15.6, but it would have been 14.37 with the same number of active staff as the previous year. A number of factors reflect the attrition of staff, including the additional stress and risk to staff working with the public during the pandemic, the vaccine mandate that resulted in staff being let go, and staff leaving what they experience as a job with personal physical and emotional risk. The high vacancy rate in public child welfare is experienced on a national level. Although regions are hiring as quickly as they are able, new staff still require completion of core training before they are able to manage cases as the sole worker, and regions are reporting a significant reduction in the number of social service staff applying for open positions.

DCYF receives intakes that correlate to the number of cases open at any one time (among other outcomes concerning children or families exiting the system). As noted in the previous year's report, intakes reduced

dramatically at the beginning of the pandemic. Teachers and other school personnel play an important role in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Other service providers were also not seeing children or were serving them virtually. Because children did not have as much direct access to these mandatory reporters, intakes received by DCYF decreased by 40-50% during the spring of 2020. However, as children returned to in-person schooling options and service providers became more directly involved with families, the number of intakes has risen. It is hoped that strategies implemented by DCYF to provide community messaging and targeted messaging focused on school personnel helped to ensure that the community continues to contact the agency to report concerns or request services.

The number of children in foster care is trending down, and this trend preceded the onset of the pandemic. As of August 31, 2022, there were 6,420 children in out-of-home care, including both licensed and unlicensed care. This is a 5.3% decrease from the same date a year earlier. There is a long-term trend dating back to 2018 toward a lower number of entries into foster care when compared to exits. Every year from 2018 on, fewer children have entered care than exited. In the first nine months of 2022, 2,692 children entered care, while 3,166 children exited care. Overall, both entries and exits are lower in 2022 than the corresponding timeframes in the previous two years.

Regional and local management staff monitor caseload sizes and may reallocate existing FTE resources based on program needs. The caseload models defined in this report will serve as indicators to regional management when adjustment based on business needs is required. Allocations of FTEs to the regions are also adjusted on a regular basis, based on a formula that takes into account the number of screened-in intakes, open cases, and children in care as a proxy for regional FTE needs.

Caseload Recommendations

Caseload size is known to affect a number of important factors in the delivery of public child welfare services. The Child Welfare League of America reflects:

“The opportunities and benefits of striving for reasonable workloads...can produce better outcomes for children and families. Reducing workloads supports efforts to engage a reasonable number of families and deliver quality services, achieve positive outcomes for children and families, retain workers, and support positive workforce attitudes and well-being.”²

A technical workgroup convened in 2020 and 2021 to review the caseload modeling across child welfare program areas and job class. The technical workgroup included representatives from each region, as well as headquarters management and program staff. Staff were represented in the following roles, Social Service Specialist 3, Social Service Specialist 5, Area Administrator, Regional Administrator, Director of Field Operations, HQ program staff, as well as DCYF fiscal and Office of Financial Management. (A human resources representative was invited but had to cancel.) Staff were represented from the east side, and the west side of the state, and staff were represented from front-end programs (CPS) and back-end programs (CFWS). As identified earlier, there is a current workload study that is underway. A contractor has developed a plan for

² <https://www.cwla.org/our-work/practice-excellence-center/workforce-2/caseload-workload/>

this study; it is currently underway and will be completed in the summer of 2023. Because the results of the workload study will have a significant impact on the Department's workload modeling and caseload recommendations, a technical workgroup was not reconvened for this annual report but will convene for the 2023 report while considering the results of the workload study.

The 2021 technical workgroup was presented with information related to the current caseload size. As mentioned earlier, the current COVID-19 pandemic has affected the child welfare caseloads. The number of intakes were lower than they were pre-pandemic. However, intakes are increasing significantly, particularly with the onset of students returning to the classroom. The 2021 workgroup was also presented with caseload recommendations from the 2020 workgroup and recommended caseload sizes by both the Child Welfare League of America as well as the Council on Accreditation. These recommended national standards for maximum caseload sizes are summarized below. Because states may structure their child welfare programs differently, the language incorporated in the recommendations of the program requirements may not correspond completely with Washington State child welfare nomenclature or how DCYF calculates caseload.

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Caseload Standards

- CPS Investigations (Initial Assessments) – 12 active reports per month.
- CPS Ongoing Support – 17 active families, with no more than one new assigned family to six open families.
- Worker completing investigations and ongoing support – 10 active ongoing families and no more than four initial assessments.
- Family-Centered Casework – 12 families.
- Worker preparing older or special needs children for adoption – 10-12 children.
- CFWS (Family Foster Care) – 12-15 families.

Council on Accreditation Caseload Standards

- CPS investigations – 12 active investigations, including no more than eight new investigations per month.
- Families receiving in-home services – 15-17 families.
- Children in out-of-home care – 12-15.
- Children in treatment foster care – 8 children.
- Children for whom the worker is arranging adoption or guardianship – 12-25.
- Supervisor ratio – 1:5.

The 2021 technical workgroup reviewed the current caseload in Washington, as well as the maximum caseload recommendations by CWLA and COA, and supported the recommended caseload modeling developed by the 2020 workgroup with one addition. These are outlined below.

CPS Investigation

Recommendation of eight (8) and no more than ten (10) new investigations per month per FTE.

Child Protective Service (CPS) investigations are intensive, short-term services focused on assessment and immediate safety concerns. The highest risk intakes are routed to CPS Investigations. In addition, families who do not consent to a Family Assessment Response pathway are assigned to a CPS investigation. CPS investigators are responsible for the initial assessment of allegations of abuse or neglect, the development and monitoring of safety plans, or the removal of children who are at imminent risk and who cannot be maintained safely in their own homes. CPS investigators are typically responsible for preparing 72-hour shelter care petitions for those children placed, filing petitions, redacting documents for discovery, and appearing at the shelter care hearing to provide testimony.

The 2020 workgroup concluded if new intakes could be limited to eight and no more than ten new investigations per month, CPS investigators would have the time to assess safety, engage families on a short-term basis, determine findings, and complete the necessary tasks to close the investigation or refer the family for voluntary services. The recommendation of eight new intakes also meets the Council on Accreditation standards. Currently, FTE allotments are forecasted at 8.6 new screened-in intakes per FTE per month, which was the baseline at the time the forecast model was developed.

The 2020 technical workgroup reported that the quality of work is higher when investigations are limited in number because it allows time for the engagement of the family, which is critical to appropriate safety planning. It also facilitates the timeliness of completed work, including case closure within timeframes established in statute. Outcomes for CPS investigations during the current pandemic were greatly improved, while staff had a lower number of intakes for which the investigator was responsible. In particular, safety assessments were more timely, and cases were closed within 90-day timeframes.

Because the CPS program staff are forecasted at 8.6 intakes per month per FTE, it is expected that intakes will continue to fall within the range recommended by the technical workgroup for front-end CPS investigation staff. The 2021 workgroup made no additional recommendations concerning workload standards for CPS investigations.

CPS-Family Assessment Response (FAR)

Recommendation of eight (8) and no more than ten (10) new FAR cases per month per FTE, with a maximum of twelve (12) cases open at any one time.

Cases assigned to FAR are lower risk than those assigned to CPS investigation, but these cases are open longer than CPS investigation cases. Currently, FAR cases may remain open for up to 120 days, and the new federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) will allow some cases to remain open for services for up to a year. FAR workers complete assessments of the family and, unlike CPS Investigations, continue to provide service in the home for some time, as they are not able to refer to Family Voluntary Services. Although the cases may be lower risk, it remains that these are cases with accompanying allegations of abuse or neglect. As such, an associated risk to children requires an ongoing focus on safety planning.

DCYF has not yet implemented FFPSA. This would require longer periods of service, new assessment tools, and additional services required in an effort to prevent further harm and placement in out-of-home care. It was expected that this would result in an additional workload for these cases, as well as higher caseload

numbers. The 2020 technical workgroup indicated that the workload recommendations would need to be revisited in the future, as the new FFPSA requirements would require further consideration after implementation. The workgroup concluded that this is an area DCYF would need to continue to monitor. Some FAR cases close after assessment, while others continue to be open for services. FAR cases open past 60 days require health and safety visits in the home on a monthly basis. The recommendation of 8-10 new FAR cases seems reasonable if there is a mix of families requiring services which necessitates keeping a case open for a longer period of time, and families where issues can be remediated with few services, allowing early case closure. If the ratio skews toward cases open longer, caseloads for the FAR worker will continue to creep up to potentially become unmanageable. DCYF delayed the implementation of FFPSA, so there were no program changes to be evaluated by the 2021 technical workgroup. As DCYF looks to implementation of FFPSA in the future, this workload standard must be re-evaluated in light of workload impacts. There are no directly comparable national standards related to FAR, as this is a unique project formerly provided through a federal waiver.

However, after evaluation by the 2021 technical workgroup, they concluded that an overall caseload size limit was important, in addition to the maximum number of new families receiving services each month. As new families require a good deal of casework time upfront, families already receiving services and monitoring must be recognized, with a recommendation of an overall maximum size for FAR caseloads, both existing and new families. The technical workgroup felt that the most appropriate maximum caseload size for FAR is twelve families, with the additional recommendation of a maximum of eight and no more than ten new intakes per month. This is in accordance with CWLA standards; caseload sizes for FAR workers met these standards in 2020 when the workload modeling was developed. That is no longer the case. The caseload size in 2022 currently is 15.5 per FTE, above the recommended maximum of 12 cases per worker. This caseload size increase is primarily attributed to a greater number of cases open to FAR; the total number of FAR cases has increased by 15.7% from the previous year. The number of FAR workers assigned to these cases has only increased by 2.9% to respond to the needs of these families.

Family Voluntary Services

Recommendation of eight (8) and no more than ten (10) families (in-home) or children (out-of-home).

Family Voluntary Services (FVS) serves families who may be at the highest risk in the child welfare program. Children are almost always served in the family home, with intensive safety monitoring, continued assessment, and services provided to the family. If the children are being served in the home, the case “counts” as a single case, despite the number of children in the family. These are families who agree to continued case management after a CPS investigator has assessed the family and determined that there are safety threats and the family can benefit from services. Families must agree to FVS, and policy requires that the assigned worker visit the home either once or twice a month, depending upon the age of the child(ren). Often, workers make home visits weekly in order to monitor the safety of the children. Because services are not court-ordered for these voluntary cases, there is a high reliance on engagement of the family to support the plan. FAR workers may develop a family-specific safety plan in order to mitigate safety threats in the home. Often, the worker refers for services and collaborates with community providers to monitor the situation in the home. Children may be at imminent risk of placement out of the home if safety cannot be

maintained, and some families enter into temporary voluntary placement agreements. The intensive case management of FVS cases ultimately prevents out-of-home placement, which is better for families, better for children, and more cost-effective.

Because it is critical that FVS workers have the time to engage potentially high-risk families and closely monitor safety in the home, the technical workgroup made the recommendations outlined above of limiting FVS cases to 8-10 active cases per FTE. FVS cases fell within this range in 2020 but rose during 2021 and now are even higher this year, with an average of 13.0 cases assigned to each worker at the time of this legislative report.

Child and Family Welfare Services

Recommendation of twelve (12) and no more than fifteen (15) children in out-of-home care.

CFWS workers provide case management for individual children and youth in the care and custody of the Department. These children are placed in licensed foster homes or group care facilities or live in unlicensed relative or kinship placements. Children may also be in the care and custody of the Department, but the worker is monitoring their safety and well-being while they live with their parents in an in-home dependency or a trial return home following a return from care.

The role of the CFWS worker and the tasks performed are fairly consistent from state to state, so the adoption of nationwide standards outlined earlier in this report was determined to be the most reasonable estimation of an appropriate caseload for this program. Both the CWLA and the COA standards reflect a caseload recommendation of 12-15 children in out-of-home care. This represents case planning and services to 12-15 individual children in out-of-home care and their families. Currently, CFWS workers have an average caseload of 16.7, an increase over the last year. Although this has increased from the previous year, there are fewer CFWS cases open currently; the increase in caseload size is due to over 67 fewer FTEs working these caseloads due to vacancies. If DCYF had the same number of workers in 2022 as compared to 2021, caseload size would fall within the standards at 14.74 cases per worker.

It is expected that CFWS workers with lowered caseloads will have better outcomes with regard to permanency. It is also expected that performance metrics will improve for required monthly visits with children, birth and adoptive families, as well as caregivers. Improved opportunities for engagement helps to ensure the safety and well-being needs of children and youth are met. Most importantly, improved permanency outcomes maximize what is best for children and youth. Improved outcomes are also cost-effective. Effective remediation for parental deficiencies that caused children to be unsafe in the home, in addition to a network of community supports, means children return to their parents and are less likely to re-enter care. For other children, achievement of permanency means living with another “forever family.” In all cases, attaining permanency is what is best for children and results in fewer children in out-of-home care.

Family Reconciliation Services

Recommendation of eighteen (18) and no more than twenty (20) families (in-home) or children (out-of-home).

Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) are voluntary services requested by a youth or their family in order to serve runaway adolescents or families experiencing conflict, with a focus on youth ages 12-17. These are short-term services oriented toward immediate crisis management or referral to other long-term services in the community. Nearly all cases are closed within 60 days, but if the case is open past 60 days, policy does require that the FRS worker conduct monthly health and safety visits.

Recommendations for caseload sizes for this program area were higher than in other program areas because not all families choose to follow through after the original request for services, and the cases are open for a shorter period of time. The program is also cost-effective, as it can prevent youth from entering out-of-home care or the worker seeks to return youth in crisis temporarily placed in out-of-home care back to their families.

The technical workgroup did not make any recommended changes to the previous workload model. In compliance with SHB2873, DCYF provides data and recommendations for system improvement to FRS annually to the Legislature. In a separate 2021 legislative report on FRS, DCYF suggested creating a road map toward moving this program into a community-based space. The recommended caseload for FRS outlined in this report will need to be re-evaluated next year in light of any changes or progress of an “FRS Community Based Pathway” project outlined in the previous FRS report to the Legislature.

Supervisor Ratios

Recommendation of five (5) social service staff for newer supervisors and six (6) social service staff for experienced supervisors.

Quality supervision of social service staff is critical to staff development and staff retention. In staff surveys, front-line staff typically rank their relationship with their supervisor as most important to them. Proper clinical supervision also affects case outcomes, with cases progressing more quickly to permanency, thereby lowering caseload sizes. The crisis affecting staff vacancies was detailed earlier in this document. Given the high number of vacancies among child welfare staff, coaching and mentoring new staff is critical to retention, staff morale, and a healthy workplace environment. Efforts to improve the supervisory workforce ultimately result in overall savings. Quality supervision also has the potential to reduce tort liability. This does not even address other well-being outcomes for both the workforce and the children and families served by the agency.

The importance of supervisors has been recognized by the Legislature as well as DCYF. The Supervisor Core Training has been modified to place a stronger emphasis on Reflective Supervision and clinical supervision principles. Additional coaching is being provided to support supervisors.

The technical workgroup recognized that newer supervisors require additional support and coaching, resulting in a recommendation of five social service staff to one supervisor. The definition of what constitutes a new supervisor was operationalized by the first technical workgroup as those supervisors with less than two years of supervisory experience with specific program knowledge or three years of supervisory experience with no specific program knowledge.

Clerical Ratios

Recommendation of one clerical to one (1) and no more than two (2) social service units.

Because clerical staff who support child welfare units are not case-carrying, the importance of clerical support staff is sometimes overlooked. However, clerical support staff in the social service units often liaise with clients, provide technical assistance, and conduct functions that would otherwise fall on the social service staff. Social service staff, including supervisors, must be supported by the availability of various clerical support. Ideally, each social service unit would be assigned a clerical support staff, but FTE allotments may not allow a 1:1 ratio. In that case, one clerical staff supporting two units should be considered a maximum ratio. It is difficult to determine the current state of clerical staff ratios, as not all offices assign clerical to a unit but have a clerical pool with a wide range of functions within the office and not direct service to a particular unit. The 2021 technical workgroup continued to support this clerical ratio.

Program Improvement Efforts Impacting Caseload

DCYF has been implementing strategies that were expected to have a direct effect on caseload size. These program improvement efforts are outlined below.

Practice Model

DCYF is re-examining the existing practice model. A practice model is a formalized set of principles, practices, and tools that guide the work. The former Children's Administration adopted Solution-Based Casework as the practice model in 2006. Since then, the agency has drifted from efforts to maintain fidelity, and DCYF is re-dedicating resources to an examination of the practice model. This may result in adoption of a new evidence-based practice model or re-introducing and resourcing of the existing practice model. DCYF has committed to this work in the five-year Child and Family Services Plan approved by our federal partners. The agency has a project manager who is responsible for managing these efforts. It is expected that a re-dedication to the existing model or adoption of a better model will serve to decrease caseload by reducing the number of children in care, both through reducing entries and increasing exits from care, improving the experience of families involved with child welfare. A new practice model has not been implemented, but work is underway.

Permanency

Focusing on permanency to safely exit children from out-of-home care to reunification, adoption, guardianship, or other acceptable permanent plans serves to lower child welfare caseloads. DCYF has placed a strong focus on permanency efforts in the last three years. Management reports have been developed to gauge permanency outcomes, and supervisors and managers have received training on how to interpret and utilize the reports.

The federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was conducted in 2018 in order to assess substantial conformity with federal outcome measures. Washington State was not in substantial conformity with either of the two permanency measures. Strategies were developed; as a result to improve outcomes and performance.

During a root cause analysis to develop the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that was approved by our federal partners in June 2020, there were conclusions based on stakeholder interviews that children were not

experiencing timely permanency, partially due to a lack of early engagement. This resulted in the first strategy addressing permanency in the PIP. The agency received a five-year federal grant to launch a permanency initiative. DCYF has developed a grant project, Permanency from Day 1 (PFD1), that uses trained Permanency Outcome Facilitators (POFs) to moderate expedited permanency planning meetings (PPMs) every 90 days, with the goal of engagement of children, youth, families, and key stakeholders. This strategy is expected to hasten safe permanency. The independent facilitators are not assigned to case responsibilities. The program began in a “soft start” phase on Oct. 16, 2020, in nine offices, and on Dec. 1, 2020, in five additional offices. The grant was officially implemented on Jan. 11, 2021, with approval from the Washington State Institutional Review Board (IRB), as there is a robust evaluation component to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention. Cases in those offices are either assigned to a grant facilitator or assigned as “business as usual” for evaluation purposes. Grant facilitators pre-meet with the family, caseworker, and supervisor, schedule and facilitate the shared planning meetings, document meeting outcomes, and provide action plans to participants. The meetings have specialized content focused on safety threats, barriers to return home, family strengths and protective factors, child safety, permanency and well-being issues, and goal-setting. Once the grant was implemented, new dependency filings and the capacity of the facilitators were re-examined, and it was determined that additional offices could be added to the intervention. As of August 2021, 22 offices are included in the intervention, including all PIP-measured offices in Regions 1, 4, and 6. If the program demonstrates the outcomes the Department anticipates, this will result in greater parental involvement in case planning, timely permanency, subsequent case closures, and reduction of caseload for CFWS staff.

The second strategy related to permanency in the PIP involves DCYF working with court partners to develop, understand, and articulate consistent language regarding DCYF’s Safety Framework and implement related changes in caseworker and court practice. This strategy returns to the basics of the Safety Framework and the Practice Model. It also recognizes how court collaboration hastens permanency when applying common tools, practices, and language. In collaboration with court partners, Safety Summits were developed and will be provided in identified jurisdictions across the State. These summits are multi-disciplinary and include training, application exercises, and action planning to use a cross-systems approach to understand the Safety Framework in order to effectively assess and create safety for families. The Capacity Building Center for Courts is conducting a Hearing Quality Evaluation post-training to assist in determining how the training principles were applied by the multi-disciplinary agencies and if practice changes are resulting in positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The third strategy involves the Office of the Attorney General (AGO), in collaboration with DCYF, developing and implementing a statewide process for timely referral and filing of termination petitions that clearly delineate expectations, roles, and responsibilities for DCYF and AGO staff. A collaborative workgroup between DCYF and AGO staff developed a new termination of parental rights referral form and process when referrals are submitted to AGO. The process includes timeframes and communication structure between DCYF and AGO when referrals are submitted. The new referral form and process were implemented statewide in June 2021. The goal of the new referral form and process was to promote consistency in practice statewide and focus on timely termination referrals, when appropriate, to establish permanency more timely for children and youth.

The fourth PIP strategy addressing permanency will increase earlier and more frequent parent engagement in the child welfare process and improve outcomes by strengthening the use of Parents for Parents (P4P). This is a program that connects parent allies (parents who have successfully navigated the public welfare system) with parents whose children are in the child welfare system, with the goal of earlier and more successful engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the P4P program as in-person court hearings were suspended, which was the main point of contact and ability for parent allies to connect with parents. Through this strategy, DCYF has partnered with P4P and established communication mechanisms by which DCYF and P4P can connect and collaborate for better engagement with parents through the dependency process.

The last permanency strategy involves improving timely referrals for and completion of home studies, which was identified as a barrier toward permanency in the CFSR. Messages have been communicated to staff around the importance of timely home study referrals, engagement with caregivers, and timely completion of home studies. In addition, collaborative processes were developed to address barriers to home study completion as well as pending withdrawals or denials of home studies. This has been an area that has substantially improved since the CFSR, with home study referrals being submitted more timely. There are additional changes that have occurred to support this practice, including a pilot project through the Licensing Division called the Caregiver Engagement Unit (CEU) and the pending development of a foster care application portal scheduled for production in November 2022.

Worker Recruitment and Retention

As identified earlier, vacancies play a significant factor in the size of the current caseloads. Retention efforts were detailed in the 2020 report, and these strategies have been updated here.

DCYF has been struggling with child welfare worker retention, which has been an issue in other states as well. Although salary increases and other strategies have led to higher rates of retention, DCYF is still making attempts to increase the retention of social service staff, both caseworkers as well as casework supervisors. A public child welfare agency with high turnover results in poorer permanency outcomes and higher caseloads. A 2015 employee retention survey revealed that 56% of the staff indicated that stress level was a factor that did not make them want to stay. Caseload is a factor in that stress. When there is high staff turnover, cases may stall and lose momentum due to the following:

- Cases must be assigned to existing caseworkers, or the supervisor must carry the case to cover vacant positions. The result is caseworkers assigned very high caseloads who are unable to engage clients in the most meaningful way that maximizes permanency solutions.
- New staff **must** participate in required training to carry a full caseload while other staff are assigned the cases.
- Less experienced staff must acquire on-the-job skills to achieve positive case outcomes.
- Relationships between caseworkers and families must be rebuilt, which may hinder case progress.
- Supervisors must dedicate time to the necessary task of training, coaching, and mentoring newer staff, allowing less time for the important task of providing clinical direction to the more experienced staff.

DCYF is addressing the issue of turnover with the following strategies:

- Expanded telework opportunities. COVID-19 has resulted in virtually all staff teleworking at this point. Given the lessons learned during the pandemic, DCYF has developed plans for expanded telework opportunities post-pandemic. Previous restrictions allowed a maximum of two telework days for staff in Child Welfare Field Operations. Social service staff will now be able to work a greater number of telework days.

DCYF has been the recipient of a five-year federal grant researching the impacts of teleworking on the child welfare worker population.³ Researchers have adapted their methods to include information learned during this expanded period of teleworking. The agency will also re-evaluate telework opportunities for child welfare staff in light of research findings at the completion of the project.

- Training Improvements. Improvements have been made to the eight-week Regional Core Training, required for all new Social Service Specialists, to better prepare them for the challenging work of child welfare. There is a stronger emphasis on Trauma-Informed Care, secondary traumatic stress, and support of staff. DCYF is also convening a workgroup to improve the onboarding process for new child welfare staff.
- DCYF has assigned a senior administrator to address the recruitment and retention of child welfare staff in a project position. Amongst other strategies, independent focus groups were held in 2022 for Area Administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers to seek feedback on barriers and issues related to staff recruitment and retention. Caseload standards and supervisory span of control will also be reconsidered, given feedback from these focus groups. DCYF is also making plans to support child welfare staff toward achieving and maintaining licensure, which is expected to improve recruitment and retention. The Department is also exploring making clinicians available to child welfare staff in order to support their mental health, particularly related to critical incidents, in addition to other employee supports available.
- Staff have identified that staff being required to supervise youth in offices or hotels increases the stress level for staff who are also attempting to maintain their existing high caseloads. Two facilities have now been leased in two regions that allow for youth to be supervised by dedicated staff outside of offices and hotel rooms in a structured environment that is more beneficial for the youth and the staff while the Department seeks suitable placement options for those youth. This strategy has been very helpful in reducing stressors for staff in those regions.
- A dedicated Talent Acquisition Manager has been hired to focus on the recruitment of child welfare staff.
- A position has now been filled for a Peer Support Administrator to manage the Peer Support program. This program provides assistance to staff experiencing critical incidents on their caseloads, such as

³ Additional information about this grant is located at <https://www.qic-wd.org/project-sites/washington-state-department-children-youth-and-families>.

fatalities or near-fatalities. Proper peer support assists in retaining staff at a critical time when stressors may lead to leaving the agency.

- There has been a renewed emphasis on clinical supervision. Supervisors play a critical role in the retention of staff, as well as provide needed direction on cases, focusing on safety, permanency, and well-being, using individual and unit outcome indicators to guide practice. This supervision is also expected to reflect the implications of implicit bias and the needs of marginalized populations. Supervisors are receiving additional coaching, and the Supervisory Core Training has been adapted to include a renewed focus on support of staff.
- Some regions are hiring Social Service Specialist 1 staff who are non-case-carrying, with an effort to assist case-carrying social workers with non-clinical tasks. This also allows a career path for staff who can then promote to Social Service Specialist 2 in training and then the more advanced Social Service Specialist 3. In addition, a Social Service Specialist 4 class has been created to serve as lead workers to better support less experienced staff. These lead workers will also be able to back up during supervisory absences.

In addition, the following strategies are being explored with regard to the recruitment of staff.

- Rethinking the minimum requirements for the Social Service Specialist Class series to qualify non-traditional degrees and experiences, which would expand the pool of candidates for positions.
- DCYF is grateful that additional FTEs were allocated to child welfare during previous legislature sessions. These positions are being allocated to the field in order to lower caseloads which will result in enhanced engagement with families resulting in positive outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Case Weighting by Program Area

The following table provides the case weighting for different case types.

Program Area	Assignment Description	What DCYF Counts	Case Weight	Assignment Characteristics
CPS	CPS Investigation	Intake	1	Type: CPS Responsibility: Investigation Role: Primary or secondary (DCYF Licensing Division CPS is not included) Count of intakes linked to an investigative assessment opened on the first day of the month with an open CPS investigation case assignment.
	CPS FAR	Intake	1	Type: CPS Responsibility: FAR Role: Primary or secondary (DLR CPS is not included) Count of intakes linked to FAR Family Assessment opened on the first day of the month with an open CPS FAR case assignment.
CFWS	CFWS Out-of-Home	Child	1	Type: CFWS Responsibility: Placement services Role: Child assignment (includes legally free children)
	CFWS In-Home	Child	1	Type: CFWS Responsibility: In-home services Role: Child Assignment
	CFWS Guardianship	Child	.36	Type: CFWS Responsibility: Guardianship Role: Child Assignment
	ICPC Receiving	Case	.5	Type: ICPC Responsibility: Placement services Role: Primary or secondary
	CFWS Tribal Payment Only	Case	.36	Type: CFWS Responsibility: Tribal Placement (payment only) Role: Primary or secondary
	Courtesy Supervision ⁴ (sending)	Child	.5 Sending	Type: CFWS Responsibility: In-home services or placement services Role: Child assignment
	Courtesy Supervision (receiving)	Child	.5 Receiving	Type: Courtesy supervision Responsibility: In-home services or placement services Role: Child assignment
FVS	FVS Out-of-Home	Child	1	Type: FVS Responsibility: Placement services Role: Child assignment
	FVS In-Home	Case	1	Type: FVS Responsibility: In-home services Role: Primary or secondary
FRS	FRS Out-of-Home	Child	1	Type: FRS Responsibility: Placement services Role: Child Assignment

⁴ When more than one worker is assigned to a case, the caseload is adjusted so that no case counts as more than one (e.g., if there is a receiving worker associated with a courtesy supervision case, the sending CFWS worker's caseload is adjusted to only count as .5).

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Program Area	Assignment Description	What DCYF Counts	Case Weight	Assignment Characteristics
	FRS In-Home	Case	1	Type: FRS Responsibility: In-home services Role: Primary or secondary
Home Study	Provider Home Study	Provider	1	Type: DLR licensed, adoptive, or relative/kinship care Responsibility: Home study Role: Primary or secondary
Applies to all Program Areas	ICW Weighting	All ICW assignments except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ICPC ▪ Guardian-ship ▪ Tribal (payment only) ▪ Provider Home Study 	1.3	<p>Considered ICW when a person’s tribal status is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrolled member ▪ Eligible for enrollment ▪ Eligible for membership ▪ Pending <p>Weighting whenever there is a match for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A child qualifying as ICW ▪ A case with a participant qualifying as ICW ▪ An intake with a person qualifying as ICW <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A CFWS out-of-home assignment for an ICW child has a count of 1.3 instead of 1 (1 X 1.3) ▪ A courtesy supervision assignment for an ICW child has a count of .65 instead of .5 (1.3/2)

Appendix B: Business Rules

The report captures all Social Service Specialist II and III workers with at least one assignment type that has the assignment characteristics described below. Social Service Specialist II and III are the only job classes included in the report. Licensors are also captured for Home Study assignments only.

1. Program Area:

- **CFWS:** Includes workers with CFWS (In-home [IH] and Out-of-Home [OH]), Guardianship, ICPC, Tribal Payment Only, and Courtesy Supervision assignments.
- **CPS - Investigation:** Includes workers with CPS-type assignments and investigation responsibility.
- **CPS - FAR:** Includes workers with CPS-type assignments and FAR responsibility.
- **FRS:** Includes workers with FRS (IH and OH) assignments.
- **FVS:** Includes workers with FVS (IH and OH) assignments.
- **Home Study:** Includes workers with Licensing, Adoption, and Relative Home Study provider assignments.

2. Cases:

- CPS (Investigation and FAR) counts represent intake counts.
- CFWS counts represent OH child counts, ICPC receiving case counts, and Tribal Payment Only case counts.
- FRS and FVS counts represent case counts for in-home and child counts for out-of-home.
- Home Study counts represent provider counts.

3. Worker %: Represents the sum of all portions of case-carrying caseworker positions with assignments in each program area:

- All case-carrying workers will be counted as a full worker (count = 1) in the report, regardless of their actual full-time employment status (Famlink cannot identify part-time workers).
- When any portion of a worker's assignments falls into a program area, DCYF counts some portion of that worker's position in that category.
- If 100% of a worker's assignments fall into just one program area (e.g., CPS), DCYF counts them as one within that program area.
- When a portion of a worker's assignments falls into more than one program area (e.g., CPS and CFWS), DCYF counts them proportionally in each program area.
 Example: If 25% of a worker's assignments fall into the CPS category and 75% fall into the CFWS category, then .25 of the worker position counts as CPS Worker %, and .75 of the worker position counts as CFWS Worker %.

4. Worker Detail: Represents the count of employees with some portion of their work counted within each program area:

- Example: The report may display a Worker % of 100 – representing the sum of full and partial worker positions assigned work within the program area – while the Worker Detail count may be 125. This means that 125 case-carrying workers (a.k.a. people) had some portion of their assignments within the program area.

- Worker Detail provides a hyperlink to the first level of detail displaying each worker included in the Worker Detail count (one row per Worker Detail count) and the assignment counts calculated for each worker.
5. **Ratio:** Calculated by dividing the number of Cases by Worker % within each program area.