Indiana Department of Child Services

Annual Staffing and Caseload Report

to the State Budget Committee and Legislative Council

State Fiscal Year 2024

(July 2023-June 2024)

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Executive summary

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is entrusted with the well-being of Hoosier families and children in crisis. Some of the most integral among the agency's staff members are family case managers (FCMs). FCMs are the state's front line against child abuse and neglect. Maintaining manageable caseloads for staff members is critical to ensuring the agency provides the best service possible to those in need. This report serves to detail current staffing levels as they compare to ongoing need.

During State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY 2024), Indiana law required DCS to abide by the 12/12/13 standard in accordance with the following code:

SECTION 2. IC 31-25-2-5, AS AMENDED BY P.L.128-2012, SECTION 86:

> Sec. 5. (a) The department shall ensure that the department maintains staffing levels of family case managers so that each region has enough family case managers to allow caseloads to be at no more than:
>
> (1) twelve (12) active cases relating to initial assessments, including investigations of an allegation of child abuse or neglect; or
>
> (2) twelve (12) families monitored and supervised in active cases relating to ongoing in-home services; or
>
> (3) thirteen (13) children monitored and supervised in active cases relating to ongoing services who are in out-of-home placements.
>
> (b) The department shall comply with the maximum caseload ratios described in subsection (a).

Each year, DCS compiles an annual report for the Legislative Council and State Budget Committee detailing the agency's compliance with the staffing standard.

This report seeks to:

- Demonstrate agency efforts to recruit, train and retain FCMs
- Describe the methodology used to compute caseloads
- Indicate whether the statewide average caseloads for FCMs exceed agency standards, and if so:
  - Include a written plan to reduce caseloads
  - Identify best management practices and resources required to achieve effective and efficient delivery of child protection services

SFY 2024 year-end snapshot

- 1,580 field FCM staff (individuals currently carrying a caseload)
- 172 FCMs in training
- 135 additional FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13
- 7 of 19 regions met the 12/12/13 standard
- 10 of 19 regions had at least 90% of staff needed to meet the 12/12/13 standard
- Statewide staffing level met 92% of need

Note: DCS uses a six-month caseload average for reporting its compliance with the 12/12/13 standard. Not all cases are weighed evenly; e.g., in-home cases are weighted by case, while out-of-home cases are weighted by child.

Recruitment, retention and training of family case managers

The Indiana Department of Child Services is more than 4,000 strong, staffed by people committed to the well-being of Hoosier families and children. Of those employees, more than 2,000 are FCMs (includes non-caseload-carrying FCMs such as Hotline, Relative Care and Foster Care Licensing) who provide critical support to Hoosier families and children in crisis. Every day, they connect those we serve with the services needed to help them recover from abuse or neglect. FCMs' dedication helps prevent future maltreatment as families rebuild and learn to provide a safe environment for the loved ones in their care.

Continuity of case management has a direct impact on the children and families the department serves. High FCM turnover can result in:

- Longer stays for children in foster care
- Delays in timely assessments of allegations of abuse and neglect
- Disruptions in child placements
- Increased rates of repeat maltreatment

Supporting family case managers is paramount to ensuring the best service for the children in DCS care. With that in mind, the agency is continually evaluating strategies to recruit the best candidates for child welfare work and retain those who have already dedicated themselves to this cause. Part of this process requires DCS to ensure front-line staff members carry manageable caseloads.

Recruitment and retention

In SFY 2024, Indiana's unemployment rate remained below the national average. In a competitive job market and facing continuing pressures to retain frontline staff, DCS's Talent Acquisition (TA) team pursued numerous avenues to increase staffing numbers. In SFY 2024, DCS lost 847 FCMs and gained 861.

DCS' TA staff cast a wide net in the search for candidates, utilizing platforms such as Indeed, sponsored job posts, non-sponsored job posts and social media. DCS TA collaborated with the communications divisions from DCS and the Indiana State Personnel Department to advertise job openings via social media, flyers and posters, updating ads at least quarterly to focus on high-need counties.

Interview events were conducted in local offices with a hiring need of five or more candidates or in counties with historical compliance below 70 percent. These were advertised on social media and in job postings.

The agency attended 14 college and university career fairs, expanding to several two-year colleges, and worked with partners across the state to help build a pipeline of potential candidates for DCS; visits were targeted toward high-need areas and events where social work and human services were the focus.

FCMs who left DCS consistently cited job duties and responsibilities and working conditions as reasons for their departure. Recognizing the challenging nature of child welfare work and the importance that a well-supported staff plays in retention, DCS implemented the Worker2Worker peer support program in early 2024 in partnership with the National Center for Peer Support and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. This program enlists retired DCS workers to staff a confidential hotline that current front-line DCS workers can contact to discuss the challenges of their daily work lives and be directed to

resources. The program also offers webinars and wellness resources for all DCS staff.

The TA team continued to utilize the FCM forecasting report in SFY 2024 to help better understand which local offices needed the most help with recruitment and hiring and engaged in proactive recruitment through monthly evaluation. The FCM forecasting report was created to better understand hiring needs in individual counties and eliminate the allocation process to become more proactive in hiring goals. The report provides data by designating which counties need to hire and fill open FCM positions to become fully compliant based on how many current caseload-carrying FCMs are needed. This process allows individual counties to have goals and be given the allowance to hire based on actual need and vacancies.

The forecasting report allows hiring managers to know when to post a requisition, providing TA staff an opening to drive candidate flow toward. The report also provides an outlook on the impact of recruitment efforts regarding future compliance. By reviewing the forecasting report, the TA team was able to further evaluate hiring needs for individual counties.

Recognizing that child welfare is a 24/7 job, DCS embarked on a project to address the fact that FCMs are regularly required to be on-call outside standard work hours to address immediate safety issues and requests coming from the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. FCMs must be available to return to work within a relatively short period of time while on-call. Historically, FCMs have not been compensated for waiting to engage time while on-call, which was a deterrent to recruitment and retention. DCS piloted a program to standardize tracking of on-call shifts and established a process by which FCMs and FCM Supervisors would be eligible for waiting-to-engage bonuses for on-call shifts beginning in SFY25.

Training

FCMs receive specialized training to ensure they are thoroughly prepared to assess allegations of child abuse and neglect. FCMs go through a comprehensive cohort training program, comprised of Essential Learning, Intermediate Learning and Advanced Learning. FCMs must complete Essential Learning before taking on a caseload.

The FCM Cohort Essential Learning training is made up of 20 classroom days and 40 local office "transfer of learning" days during which trainees apply what they have learned. In addition to the classroom training, 10 online learning modules are completed by the new FCMs at their local offices. Essential Learning ensures new FCMs receive ample time in the local office to gain hands-on experience relative to their area of work. Upon completing the 12-week Essential Training program, FCMs take on smaller caseloads that grow in complexity as their comfort level increases.

During Intermediate Training, which occurs during months four to six, FCMs participate in six instructor-led trainings and complete one online module. During Advanced Learning, which occurs during months seven through 12, FCMs participate in four instructor-led courses.

DCS begins a new cohort every two weeks. In the last fiscal year, DCS held 31 cohorts, with 742 cohort graduates.

DCS continues to focus on leadership development. DCS concluded the *Emerging Leader* program, *Leadership Academy for Supervisors* and *Leadership Academy for Middle Managers*. From July to December 2023, leaders were provided an opportunity to attend *Barriers to Learning and Continuous Learning*. Additionally, in January 2024, DCS launched a year-long quality decision-making series for leaders.

Staff caseload data

Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK), the DCS case-management system, captures information monthly about current staffing levels and caseloads. This data helps agency leaders, in conjunction with the human resources department, determine which regions are in the greatest need of additional employees.

MaGIK tracks new assessments opened each month, as well as ongoing cases, broken down by county. PeopleSoft, the state's human resources information system, compiles staffing levels, including total staff, staff in training, and staff unavailable for other reasons (such as leaves of absence).

DCS is organized into 18 geographical regions, with each region comprised of between one and seven counties. Also, the department created the central office region to encompass FCMs from the institutional assessment unit and the Older Youth Case Management team, for a total of 19 regions.

The forecasting report and monthly metrics allow for improved county-based job postings, which give each manager in the regions the ability to pipeline candidates for when they do have allocations and to collaboratively share candidates with other nearby counties. This also allows the candidate more flexibility in choosing their desired location.

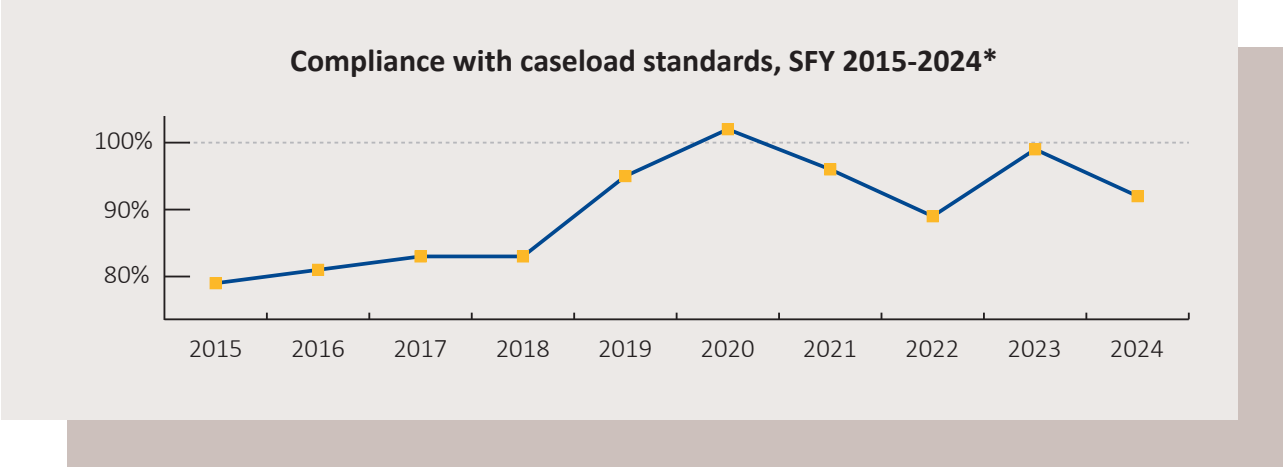
Methodology used to compute caseloads

House Enrolled Act 1006 (2019) updated the DCS caseload standard to align with Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) best practices at the time.

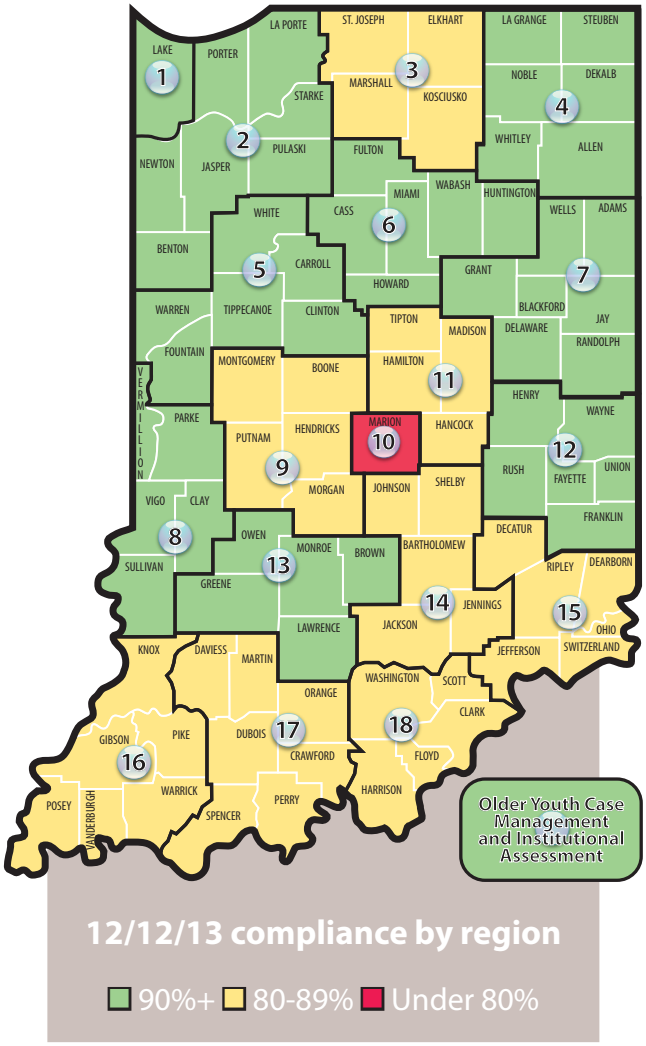
There is no universal caseload standard governing all states, and most states do not have caseload standards codified in statute. Moreover, many states weigh cases differently in calculating caseload compliance, which means case counts are not a function of just volume, but also complexity.

To provide the most accurate reflection of caseloads, the methodology used to compile this report:

- Removes specialized FCMs who do not carry caseloads (e.g., hotline intake specialists,



*Prior to SFY 2020, DCS used the 12/17 caseload standard, which assumed an FCM simultaneously had no more than 12 assessments of child abuse/neglect allegations and 17 children monitored and supervised in ongoing cases. In SFY 2020, DCS moved to the 12/12/13 standard as described in the Executive Summary on page 3.



foster-care and relative-care specialists, and staff in training) from the 12/12/13 caseload analysis

- Utilizes a six-month caseload average to measure compliance

DCS strives to hire to 120% of its six-month average need of family case managers, where possible, to stay ahead of turnover.

Compliance with standards and plans to reduce caseloads

SFY 2024 reflects a 14.6% increase in the number of cases handled by DCS. At the end of the state fiscal year, DCS had a total of 16,231 children (including informal adjustments, collaborative care and CHINS), compared with 14,163 children the prior year.

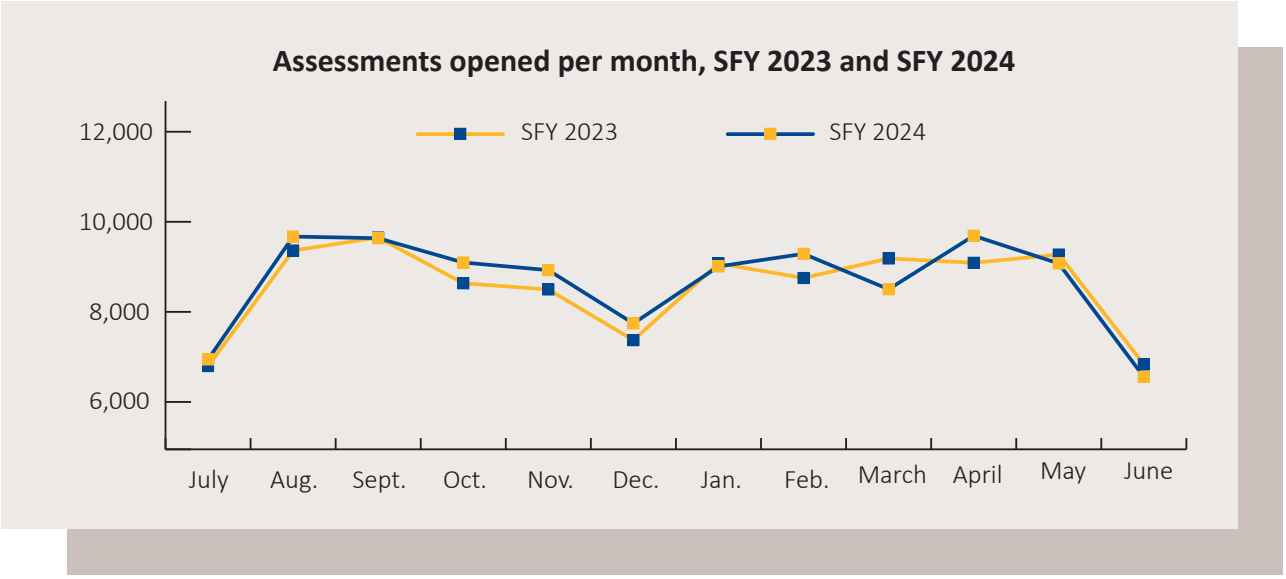
At the end of SFY 2024, the agency staffing level was at 92% of need for the standard, with 7 of 19 regions meeting the 12/12/13 standard and 10 of 19 meeting at least 90% of the standard.

This number is calculated in each region in this manner: six-month average number of FCMs needed minus the number of FCMs already deployed to the field or still in training. FCMs in training are removed from the calculation because they do not carry caseloads.

In addition to analyzing data regarding ongoing cases, DCS evaluates the number of assessments opened each month. Staffing to meet the 12/12/13 standard is particularly challenging because of the fluctuation in reports DCS receives each month. This trend continued in SFY 2024, as evidenced by the range of assessments between the highest month total (9,690) and the lowest (6,556).

Assessments opened per month and change from SFY 2023

- **July 2023:** 6,945 (+2.18%)
- **August 2023:** 9,672 (+3.31%)
- **September 2023:** 9,636 (-0.16%)
- **October 2023:** 9,096 (+5.34%)
- **November 2023:** 8,927 (+5.05%)
- **December 2023:** 7,743 (+5.03%)
- **January 2024:** 9,009 (-0.75%)
- **February 2024:** 9,289 (+6.14%)
- **March 2024:** 8,503 (-7.44%)
- **April 2024:** 9,690 (+6.60%)
- **May 2024:** 9,075 (-2.14%)
- **June 2024:** 6,556 (-4.04%)



Effective and efficient delivery of child protection services

During SFY 2024, DCS recorded several major successes in its effort to achieve the agency vision that children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities:

- Performance-measure successes:
  - Fewer children in residential care
  - Reduced time to permanency
  - Fewer days in foster care
- Increased supports to unlicensed kinship caregivers, providing $300 stipend per month per child
- Increased the number of local transition houses, which help in assisting and caring for children awaiting placement
- Implemented internal process for identifying and staffing high-acuity youth in need of placement and resources
- Maintained strong partnerships with providers, ensuring they have the resources needed to achieve the shared vision of seeing all children grow up in stable, supportive homes
- Increased financial support for families who provide a home through adoption or eligible guardianships to a child in Indiana's foster care system to 100 percent of the amount the child received while in foster care, removing the need for most adoption subsidy negotiations

Hotline

The Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is staffed by trained intake-specialist FCMs and at least one supervisor on every shift, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Intake specialists ask callers thorough questions to obtain comprehensive information about each potential case, including factors that could impact worker safety. They enter these details into DCS' intake system and note whether

the information provided meets statutory criteria for an assessment. The local DCS office makes a final decision whether to open an assessment. The hotline averaged 226,110 reports per year between SFY 2016 and SFY 2024:

- SFY 2016: 211,502
- SFY 2017: 235,609
- SFY 2018: 247,658
- SFY 2019: 240,756
- SFY 2020: 225,872
- SFY 2021: 230,246
- SFY 2022: 218,614
- SFY 2023: 210,654
- SFY 2024: 214,079

From SFY 2016 to SFY 2018, the hotline experienced a 17% increase in reports, due in large part to increased awareness of the hotline. In SFY 2024, the hotline saw a 1.63% increase in reports in comparison to the previous year.

Exhibit 1

12/12/13 Staffing and Caseload Report, State Fiscal Year 2024

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed[1]	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload[2]	Additional FCMs Needed[3]	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads[4]	FCMs in Training[5]	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training[6]
Statewide						
Total	**1,715**	**1,580**	**135**	**92%**	**172**	**(37)**
Central Office						
Total	**82**	**93**	**(11)**	**113%**	**3**	**(14)**
Older Youth Case Mgmt.	63	75	(12)	119%	3	(15)
Institutional Unit	19	18	1	95%	0	1
Region 1						
Total	**89**	**93**	**(4)**	**104%**	**7**	**(11)**
Lake	89	93	(4)	104%	7	(11)
Region 2						
Total	**68**	**68**	**0**	**100%**	**4**	**(4)**
Benton/Newton*	6	6	0	100%	0	0
Jasper	6	7	(1)	117%	0	(1)
Laporte	30	25	5	83%	4	1
Porter	18	19	(1)	106%	0	(1)
Pulaski	3	4	(1)	133%	0	(1)
Starke	5	7	(2)	140%	0	(2)

*Combined office

[1]Average number of caseload-carrying field FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13 standard as of 6/30/24
[2]Number of caseload-carrying field FCMs as of 6/30/24
[3]Additional FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13 standard as of 6/30/24 (Column 2 minus Column 3)
[4]Percentage of staff need that was filled as of 6/30/24 (Column 3 divided by Column 2)
[5]The number of FCMs in training as of 6/30/24
[6]Additional FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13 standard, after taking into account those currently in training, as of 6/30/24 (Column 4 minus Column 6)
Note: Staff numbers are rounded to the nearest 1 person. Some figures may be slightly off because of rounding.

= 90% or more **= 80-89%** **= 79% or less**

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload	Additional FCMs Needed	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads	FCMs in Training	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training
Region 3						
Total	**129**	**105**	**24**	**81%**	**11**	**13**
Elkhart	39	31	8	79%	6	2
Kosciusko	15	12	3	80%	2	1
Marshall	7	6	1	86%	0	1
St. Joseph	68	56	12	82%	3	9
Region 4						
Total	**134**	**126**	**8**	**94%**	**19**	**(11)**
Allen	96	96	0	100%	13	(13)
Dekalb	11	8	3	73%	2	1
LaGrange	5	3	2	60%	1	1
Noble	7	4	3	57%	3	0
Steuben	7	8	(1)	114%	0	(1)
Whitley	8	7	1	88%	0	1
Region 5						
Total	**53**	**48**	**5**	**91%**	**8**	**(3)**
Carroll	3	2	1	67%	0	1
Clinton	7	5	2	71%	2	0
Fountain/Warren*	5	6	(1)	120%	0	(1)
Tippecanoe	31	27	4	87%	6	(2)
White	7	8	(1)	114%	0	(1)

*Combined office

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload	Additional FCMs Needed	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads	FCMs in Training	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training
Region 6						
Total	**60**	**70**	**(10)**	**117%**	**4**	**(14)**
Cass	9	8	1	89%	2	(1)
Fulton	5	6	(1)	120%	1	(2)
Howard	22	27	(5)	123%	0	(5)
Huntington	8	11	(3)	138%	0	(3)
Miami	11	10	1	91%	1	0
Wabash	5	8	(3)	160%	0	(3)
Region 7						
Total	**92**	**107**	**(15)**	**116%**	**4**	**(19)**
Adams	7	6	1	86%	1	0
Blackford	5	6	(1)	120%	0	(1)
Delaware	35	38	(3)	109%	3	(6)
Grant	24	32	(8)	133%	0	(8)
Jay	9	9	0	100%	0	0
Randolph	6	8	(2)	133%	0	(2)
Wells	6	8	(2)	133%	0	(2)

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload	Additional FCMs Needed	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads	FCMs in Training	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training
Region 8						
Total	**85**	**80**	**5**	**94%**	**4**	**1**
Clay	12	13	(1)	108%	0	(1)
Parke/Vermillion*	9	10	(1)	111%	0	(1)
Sullivan	7	9	(2)	129%	0	(2)
Vigo	57	48	9	84%	4	5
Region 9						
Total	**64**	**52**	**12**	**81%**	**9**	**3**
Boone	10	9	1	90%	1	0
Hendricks	20	11	9	55%	3	6
Montgomery	10	9	1	90%	1	0
Morgan	15	17	(2)	113%	1	(3)
Putnam	9	6	3	67%	3	0
Region 10						
Total	**272**	**211**	**61**	**78%**	**28**	**33**
Marion East	71	50	21	70%	9	12
Marion North	62	38	24	61%	4	20
Marion South	66	59	7	89%	11	(4)
Marion West	73	64	9	88%	4	5

*Combined office

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload	Additional FCMs Needed	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads	FCMs in Training	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training
Region 11						
Total	**110**	**96**	**14**	**87%**	**16**	**(2)**
Hamilton	26	25	1	96%	6	(5)
Hancock	15	15	0	100%	2	(2)
Madison	66	50	16	76%	8	8
Tipton	3	6	(3)	200%	0	(3)
Region 12						
Total	**47**	**48**	**(1)**	**102%**	**3**	**(4)**
Fayette	7	5	2	71%	0	2
Franklin/Union*	3	4	(1)	133%	0	(1)
Henry	11	14	(3)	127%	0	(3)
Rush	4	5	(1)	125%	0	(1)
Wayne	22	20	2	91%	3	(1)
Region 13						
Total	**61**	**61**	**0**	**100%**	**8**	**(8)**
Brown	4	5	(1)	125%	0	(1)
Greene	8	10	(2)	125%	0	(2)
Lawrence	17	15	2	88%	4	(2)
Monroe	26	24	2	92%	4	(2)
Owen	6	7	(1)	117%	0	(1)

*Combined office

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload	Additional FCMs Needed	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads	FCMs in Training	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training
Region 14						
Total	**71**	**62**	**9**	**87%**	**12**	**(3)**
Bartholomew	19	11	8	58%	6	2
Jackson	11	11	0	100%	0	0
Jennings	9	7	2	78%	2	0
Johnson	22	23	(1)	105%	2	(3)
Shelby	10	10	0	100%	2	(2)
Region 15						
Total	**45**	**36**	**9**	**80%**	**3**	**6**
Dearborn/Ohio*	12	9	3	75%	0	3
Decatur	10	9	1	90%	0	1
Jefferson	11	10	1	91%	2	(1)
Ripley	9	5	4	56%	0	4
Switzerland	3	3	0	100%	1	(1)
Region 16						
Total	**119**	**106**	**13**	**89%**	**14**	**(1)**
Gibson	8	7	1	88%	2	(1)
Knox	16	17	(1)	106%	1	(2)
Pike	5	5	0	100%	0	0
Posey	8	7	1	88%	0	1
Vanderburgh	70	59	11	84%	10	1
Warrick	12	11	1	92%	1	0

*Combined office

County Name	6-Month Average Number of FCMs Needed	Available FCMs Carrying Full Caseload	Additional FCMs Needed	Percentage of Need Filled by FCMs Carrying Full Caseloads	FCMs in Training	FCMs Needed Minus FCMs in Training
Region 17						
Total	**51**	**42**	**9**	**82%**	**5**	**4**
Crawford	5	5	0	100%	0	0
Daviess	10	7	3	70%	1	2
Dubois	8	7	1	88%	0	1
Martin	3	3	0	100%	1	(1)
Orange	7	6	1	86%	1	0
Perry	10	8	2	80%	0	2
Spencer	8	6	2	75%	2	0
Region 18						
Total	**85**	**76**	**9**	**89%**	**10**	**(1)**
Clark	32	25	7	78%	3	4
Floyd	27	24	3	89%	3	0
Harrison	9	8	1	89%	1	0
Scott	12	12	0	100%	3	(3)
Washington	5	7	(2)	140%	0	(2)

Prepared by the Office of Data Management, Reports and Analysis. Source: MaGIK Monthly Data

INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF
CHILD
SERVICES