



Child Protective Investigator and Child Protective Investigator Supervisor Educational Qualifications, Turnover, Professional Advancement, and Working Conditions Status Report

ANNUAL REPORT

Department of Children and Families

Office of Child Welfare

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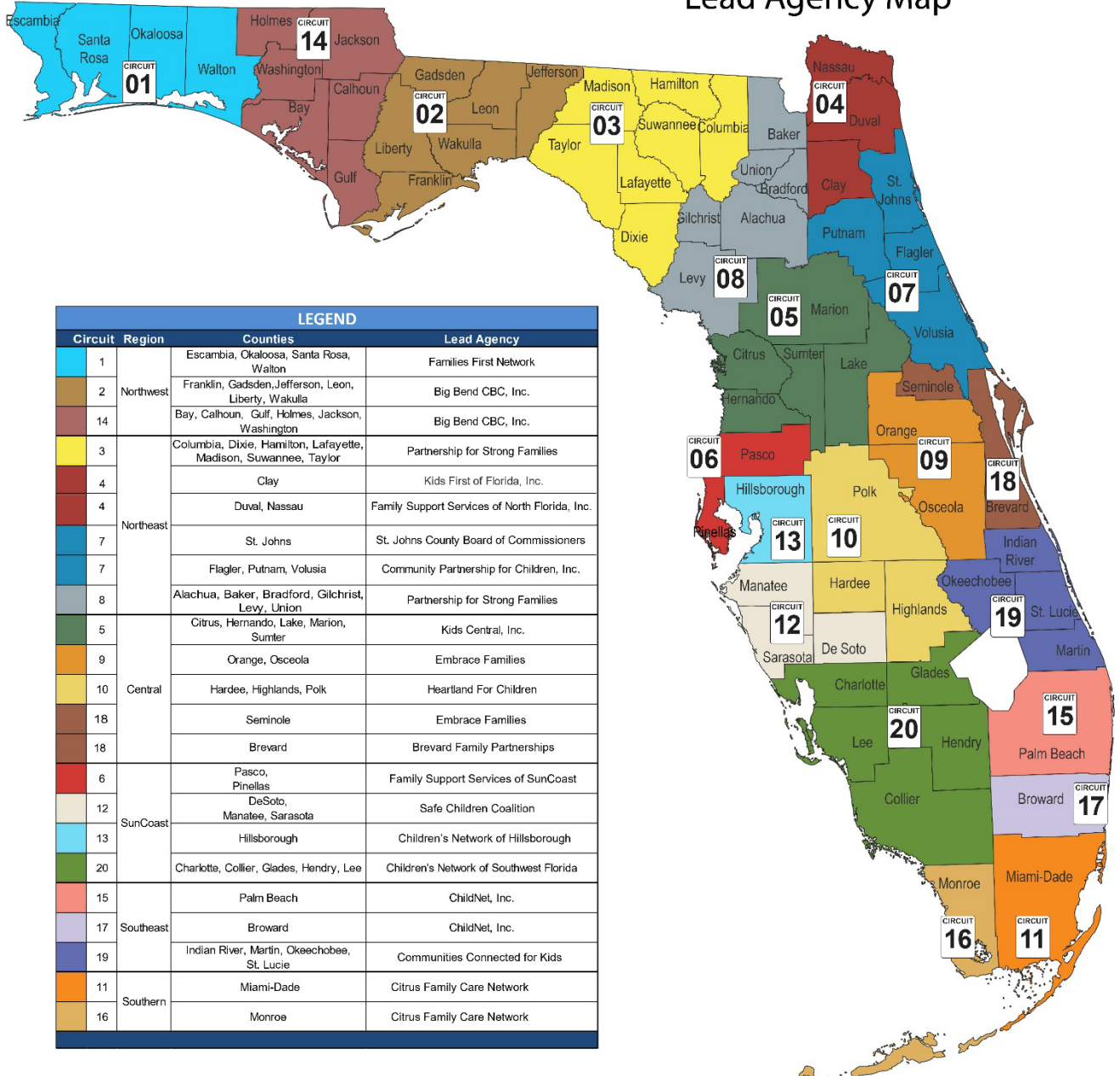
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DCF Regions, Circuits, and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies



Community-Based Care Lead Agency Map



Purpose

This report meets requirements contained within section 402.402(3), Florida Statutes, which requires the Department of Children and Families (Department) to provide a status report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives as to the educational qualifications, turnover, professional advancement, and working conditions of the Department's Child Protective Investigators, Child Protective Investigator Supervisors, and other child protective investigative staff.

This report includes recent information related to the Department's full-time equivalent (FTE) child protective investigative positions within the areas of:

- The distribution of child protective investigative positions across the six Department regions and allocation of child protective investigative positions across the four-child protective investigation class titles.
- Child Protective Investigative staff minimum qualifications and base pay.
- The percentage of vacant Child Protective Investigative positions.
- The monthly average number of new cases assigned to all Child Protective Investigator and Senior Child Protective Investigator positions.
- The average number of Child Protective Investigators and Senior Child Protective Investigators supervised by a Child Protective Investigator Supervisor – SES.
- The turnover rate for all Child Protective Investigative positions.
- General educational information for all Child Protective Investigative positions.
- Professional advancement within the Child Protective Investigation classification.
- Employee satisfaction, opinion, and concerns survey results.

General Statutory Requirements

Chapter 39, Florida Statutes, outlines Child Protective Investigator (CPI) responsibilities for all child-related reports accepted by the Florida Abuse Hotline (Hotline). First, Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) are directed to determine "whether there is any indication that any child in the family or household has been abused, abandoned, or neglected," and, if so, to identify the individual responsible for the maltreatment. Second, CPIs are required to conduct and complete a Family Functioning Assessment to identify the source of all danger threats in the home and assess the protective capacity of the caregivers for the child. Third, when a child has been maltreated, CPIs must consider the implementation of an in-home safety plan and the initiation of in-home services to protect the child and stabilize the family. In the most severe situations, CPIs remove the child from the home and place the child with another parent, relative, non- relative, or in licensed substitute care.

Department of Children and Families and Sheriff Office Investigations

Child protective investigations are conducted by the Department in 60 of Florida's 67 counties. Sheriff's Offices perform child protective investigations in the remaining seven counties (Broward, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Seminole, and Walton Counties) under grant agreements with the Department. The information within this report addresses positions for Department child protective investigative staff. While retention data from the Sheriff's Offices is not a requirement of the grant, collaborative information sharing indicates that the Sheriff's Offices are similarly challenged by high turnover for their CPI positions. Hence, the challenging nature of the work responsibilities transcends the individual entities responsible for child protection across the state.

Child Protective Investigative Positions

Child Protective Investigative Staff – Minimum Qualifications, Base Pay, and Position Descriptions

Between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, the class titles and annual base salaries for each of the Child Protective Investigations classes are:

- Child Protective Investigator - \$39,600
- Senior Child Protective Investigator - \$41,500
- Child Protective Investigator - Child Protective Field Support Consultant - \$46,900
- Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - \$49,200

Child Protective Investigative Position Classification and Vacancies

People First, Florida's automated web-based Human Resource Information System, provides classification and vacancy data for all child protective investigative positions. As of June 24, 2022, there were 1,623 positions statewide within the Child Protective Investigation job class, with 324.5 FTEs (approximately 20 percent) being vacant (see Table 1). There was a 9 percent increase in the total number of vacant positions this fiscal year. While this one-day snapshot reflects similar vacancy rates between most classes, the annualized turnover rates discussed later in this report highlight much wider variances between positions over time.

| Table 1 – Classification and Vacancies of the Department Child Protective Investigative Positions as of 6/27/2022 | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Region | Class Title | Position Allocation as of 6/27/2022 | Total Vacant Positions as of 6/27/2022 | Percentage of Positions Vacant as of 6/27/2022 |
| Northwest | Child Protective Investigator | 131 | 23 | 17.56% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 39 | 5 | 15.38% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 4 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 35 | 3 | 8.57% |
| Total | | 209 | 32 | 15.31% |
| Northeast | Child Protective Investigator | 243 | 84 | 34.57% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 55 | 22 | 40.00% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 16 | 2 | 12.59% |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 58 | 12 | 20.69% |
| Total | | 372 | 120 | 32.26% |
| Central | Child Protective Investigator | 330 | 36 | 10.91% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 79 | 11 | 13.92% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 49 | 2 | 4.08% |

| Table 1 – Classification and Vacancies of the Department Child Protective Investigative Positions as of 6/27/2022 | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Region | Class Title | Position Allocation as of 6/27/2022 | Total Vacant Positions as of 6/27/2022 | Percentage of Positions Vacant as of 6/27/2022 |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 83 | 6 | 7.23% |
| Total | | 541 | 55 | 10.17% |
| Suncoast | Child Protective Investigator | 118 | 42.5 | 36.02% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 22 | 7 | 77.27% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 8 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 26 | 7 | 26.92% |
| Total | | 174 | 66.5 | 38.22% |
| Southeast | Child Protective Investigator | 118 | 23 | 19.49% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 30 | 1 | 3.33% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 4 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 31 | 3 | 9.68% |
| Total | | 183 | 27 | 14.75% |
| Southern | Child Protective Investigator | 83 | 8 | 9.64% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 25 | 10 | 40.00% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 10 | 1 | 10.00% |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 26 | 5 | 19.23% |
| Total | | 144 | 24 | 16.67% |
| Statewide | Child Protective Investigator | 1023 | 217.5 | 21.26% |
| | Senior Child Protective Investigator | 250 | 68 | 27.2% |
| | Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Consultant | 91 | 6 | 6.59% |
| | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | 259 | 32 | 12.36% |
| Total | | 1,623 | 323.5 | 19.93% |
| Source: People First Data Warehouse Vacancy Report as of June 27, 2022. This report reflects the number of vacant positions within a region the day the data was retrieved. | | | | |

Average Child Protective Investigator Caseloads and the Average Supervisor to Child Protective Investigator Ratio

Child Protective Investigator Caseload

Manageable caseloads are fundamental to the retention and overall job satisfaction of child protective investigative staff.

Table 2 below shows in SFY 2021-2022 the Department conducted 114,995 child protective investigations (Sheriff's Offices investigations excluded). The trend in investigations conducted for the past 12 months reflect that the numbers for SFY 2021-2022 show approximately a 16 percent decrease in overall intakes accepted by the Hotline compared to the prior fiscal year.

| Table 2 – Eight Year Trend in Child Protective Investigations by Region (SFY) (Initial and Additional Investigations) | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Region | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19* | 2019-20* | 2020-21* | 2021-22* |
| Northwest Region | 17,998 | 19,178 | 19,413 | 19,068 | 17,460 | 15,191 | 18,047 | 14,701 |
| Northeast Region | 31,481 | 32,957 | 33,924 | 32,135 | 31,222 | 26,800 | 32,212 | 26,264 |
| Central Region* | 45,116 | 46,507 | 47,658 | 46,981 | 45,527 | 56,158 | 45,395 | 36,671 |
| Suncoast Region* | 13,650 | 14,286 | 15,367 | 14,311 | 14,016 | 12,730 | 15,926 | 13,226 |
| Southeast Region* | 15,786 | 15,908 | 16,719 | 15,797 | 15,349 | 13,285 | 14,940 | 12,532 |
| Southern Region | 13,841 | 13,844 | 14,474 | 13,478 | 12,631 | 10,522 | 11,594 | 10,561 |
| Investigative Totals* | 137,872 | 142,680 | 147,555 | 141,770 | 136,205 | 134,686 | 138,114 | 114,955 |
| Source: Child Protective Investigation Trend Reports as of September 11, 2018 for SFY 2013-14 to SFY 2017-1; Child Welfare Dashboard for SFY 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. | | | | | | | | |

*Sheriff's Offices Excluded

Table 3 provides the average monthly number of new investigations assigned to CPIs and Sr. CPIs by region for Department child abuse investigations based upon allocated and filled positions for SFY 2021-2022. While other child protection professionals (e.g., Field Support Consultants and the respective CPI Supervisor) may consult on an investigation; CPIs, and Sr CPIs conduct the actual investigation. Consequently, only the CPI and Sr. CPI position allocations are used to establish caseload numbers based on the number of new investigations assigned.

Current Child Protective Investigator Workload

| Table 3 – Average Monthly Number of New Investigations Assigned to CPI and Sr. CPI Investigators SFY 2021-22. | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|--|--|--|---|--|
| | Region | Total Investigations (Initial and Additional) | Allocated CPI / Sr. CPI Investigators as of 6/27/22 | Average Monthly New Cases Per Allocated Position | Filled CPI / Sr. CPI Positions as of 6/27/22 | Average Monthly New Cases Per Actual Filled Positions |
| SFY 2020-21 | Northwest | 14,701 | 170 | 7 | 142 | 9 |
| | Northeast | 26,264 | 298 | 7 | 192 | 11 |
| | Central | 37,671 | 409 | 8 | 362 | 8 |
| | Suncoast | 13,226 | 140 | 8 | 90.5 | 12 |
| | Southeast | 12,532 | 148 | 7 | 124 | 8 |
| | Southern | 10,561 | 108 | 8 | 90 | 10 |
| | Statewide | 114,995 | 1,273 | 8 | 987.5 | 10 |
| Source: Child Welfare Dashboard as of July 15, 2022 and People First Data Warehouse Vacancy Report as of June 27, 2022. | | | | | | |

Statewide, CPI and Sr. CPI positions received a total of eight investigations per month for SYF 2021-2022. It is important to note that Florida's statewide average of eight is based on allocated, not filled positions. For example, a field unit comprised of six allocated positions (but staffed at only five investigators) working 60 cases per month has an average new monthly workload of ten (60/6). The actual caseload, however, is 12 per filled position during that month (60/5). The last column in Table 3 shows the adjusted rates of (10) based on filled, not allocated, positions as of June 27, 2022.

Child Protective Investigator and Supervisor Staffing Ratios

CPI Supervisor positions are responsible for reviewing and approving all work conducted by CPIs and Sr. CPIs. Field Support Consultants augment the unit supervisor role by providing direct, hands-on support to provisionally certified CPIs until they are fully credentialed (typically a 12-month process). Field Support Consultants also offer coaching and mentoring to established investigators working complex cases (e.g., child fatalities, domestic violence, human trafficking). The average number of CPI and Sr. CPI positions per CPI Supervisor is calculated by dividing the total number of allocated CPI Supervisor positions by the total number of allocated CPI and Sr. CPI positions. Table 4 provides a comparison of the average number of CPI and Sr. CPI positions assigned to each CPI Supervisor by region. The current statewide staffing pattern is approximately one supervisor per 5.0 investigators.

| Table 4 – Distribution of Department Child Protective Investigation Positions per Supervisor by Region by State Fiscal Year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|------------------------|--|--|------------------------|--|--|------------------------|--|--|------------------------|
| Region | Position Allocation SFY 2018-19 | | | Position Allocation SFY 2019-20 | | | Position Allocation SFY 2020-21 | | | Position Allocation SFY 2021-22 | | |
| | Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | Average Staffing Ratio | Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | Average Staffing Ratio | Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | Average Staffing Ratio | Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators | Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES | Average Staffing Ratio |
| Northwest | 168 | 35 | 4.8 | 190 | 35 | 5.4 | 169 | 35 | 4.8 | 170 | 35 | 4.9 |
| Northeast | 300 | 61 | 4.9 | 308 | 61 | 5 | 295 | 61 | 4.8 | 298 | 58 | 5.1 |
| Central | 431 | 83 | 5.2 | 427 | 83 | 5.1 | 416 | 83 | 5 | 409 | 83 | 4.9 |
| Suncoast | 137 | 25 | 5.5 | 159 | 25 | 6.4 | 139 | 25 | 5.56 | 140 | 26 | 5.4 |
| Southeast | 151 | 31 | 4.9 | 170 | 31 | 5.5 | 149 | 31 | 4.8 | 148 | 31 | 4.8 |
| Southern | 123 | 28 | 4.4 | 125 | 28 | 4.5 | 114 | 28 | 4.1 | 108 | 26 | 4.2 |
| Statewide | 1,310 | 263 | 5.0 | 1,379 | 263 | 5.2 | 1,282 | 263 | 4.9 | 1,273 | 259 | 4.9 |
| Source: State of Florida People First Data Warehouse as of June 24, 2019, July 20, 2020, June 24, 2021, and June 27, 2022. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Turnover

The CPI role is an incredibly complex, challenging position which requires critical thinking and real-time problem-solving skills. These types of demands can be difficult for a young workforce. Most child welfare professionals experience situations for the very first time while performing the day-to-day challenges and stress of the position.

The turnover rates (Table 5) for all child protective investigation positions over the past two fiscal years have averaged 36.28 percent and 55.40 percent, respectively. Turnover rates for only the CPI positions over the past two years have averaged 49.97 percent and 71.18 percent, respectively. The statewide turnover rate for supervisors over this same time-period averaged 8.56 percent and 20.21 percent, respectively. The statewide turnover rate for Field Support Consultants over the past two years have averaged 3.85 percent and 12.42 percent respectively. The turnover percentages for all CPI related positions increased during the last fiscal year.

| Table 5 – Turnover Rate of Department Child Protective Investigation Positions by Region and Class Title | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| Region | Class Title | SYF 2020-21 | | | SYF 2021-22 | | |
| | | Ave # Emp | Separated | Rate | Ave # Emp | Separated | Rate |
| Northwest | Investigator | 129 | 70 | 54.26% | 114.5 | 87 | 75.98% |
| | Senior Investigator | 41 | 8 | 19.51% | 37 | 14 | 37.84% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 4 | 0 | 00.00% | 4 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Supervisor | 34.5 | 5 | 14.49% | 33.5 | 9 | 26.87% |
| | Total | 208.5 | 83 | 35.32% | 189 | 110 | 58.20% |
| Northeast | Investigator | 223 | 135 | 60.54% | 176.5 | 154 | 87.25% |
| | Senior Investigator | 50.5 | 17 | 33.66% | 40.5 | 27 | 66.67% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 15 | 0 | 00.00% | 13.5 | 3 | 22.22% |
| | Supervisor | 60 | 7 | 11.67% | 54.5 | 13 | 23.85% |
| | Total | 348.5 | 159 | 45.62% | 285 | 197 | 69.12% |
| Central | Investigator | 341.5 | 125 | 36.60% | 325 | 197 | 60.62% |
| | Senior Investigator | 75.5 | 8 | 10.60% | 70 | 25 | 35.71% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 42.5 | 2 | 4.71% | 44.5 | 2 | 4.49% |
| | Supervisor | 81 | 3 | 3.70% | 79 | 11 | 13.92% |
| | Total | 540.5 | 138 | 25.53% | 518.5 | 235 | 45.32% |
| Suncoast | Investigator | 100 | 78 | 78.00% | 81.5 | 83 | 101.84% |
| | Senior Investigator | 19.5 | 7 | 35.90% | 14 | 10 | 71.43% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 3.5 | 1 | 28.57% | 5.5 | 1 | 18.18% |
| | Supervisor | 22.5 | 3 | 13.33% | 21 | 5 | 23.81% |
| | Total | 145.5 | 89 | 61.17% | 122 | 99 | 81.15% |
| Southeast | Investigator | 118 | 47 | 39.83% | 102.5 | 54 | 52.68% |
| | Senior Investigator | 25.5 | 2 | 7.84% | 27 | 8 | 29.63% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 3.5 | 0 | 0.00% | 3.5 | 1 | 28.57% |
| | Supervisor | 31 | 1 | 3.23% | 30.5 | 4 | 13.11% |
| | Total | 178 | 50 | 28.09% | 163.5 | 67 | 40.98% |
| Southern | Investigator | 83 | 42 | 50.60% | 78 | 50 | 64.10% |
| | Senior Investigator | 21.5 | 3 | 13.95% | 18.5 | 12 | 64.86% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 9.5 | 0 | 00.00% | 9.5 | 3 | 31.58% |
| | Supervisor | 28 | 3 | 10.71% | 24 | 7 | 29.17% |
| | Total | 142 | 48 | 33.80% | 130 | 72 | 55.38% |
| Statewide | Investigator | 994.5 | 497 | 49.97% | 878 | 625 | 71.18% |
| | Senior Investigator | 233.5 | 45 | 19.27% | 207 | 96 | 46.38% |
| | Field Support Consultant | 78 | 3 | 3.85% | 80.5 | 10 | 12.42% |
| | Supervisor | 257 | 22 | 8.56% | 242.5 | 49 | 20.21% |
| | Total | 1,563 | 567 | 36.28% | 1408 | 780 | 55.40% |
| Source: Florida Department of Children and Families, Critical Class Turnover Summary by Location SFY 2020-21 and 2021-22. | | | | | | | |

Note: The Average Number of Employees (Ave # Emp) is calculated using the number of employees at the beginning of the period plus the number of employees at the end of the period, the sum of which is divided by two.

Overall, turnover has a direct effect on manageable caseloads for experienced investigative staff. When CPIs leave their position, cases are often redistributed to the remaining CPIs which causes an increase in their average caseloads. The high turnover rates impact the Department's ability to develop a highly skilled, specialized workforce that is ready for career advancement opportunities.

Improving workforce stability by reducing staff turnover rates continues to be imperative for the Department. The most important retention factor is the positive working relationship between the CPI and their Supervisor and the level of support available.

Based on feedback from CPI staff, the top reasons for turnover are number of cases/workload, stress/emotional exhaustion, administrative tasks/activities, bureaucracy and rigid compliance oriented policies, and lack of support network.

Professional Advancement

Professional advancement is an important aspect in the retention of qualified child welfare professionals. Providing opportunities for growth and career advancement can help improve worker satisfaction. For SFY 2021-2022, there were 316 promotional advancements, which is approximately **55** percent higher than the previous year. Of those 316 advancements, approximately **51** percent were CPIs promoting into other positions. Of those CPI promotions, **126** promoted to Sr. CPI positions, **8** promoted to a CPI Supervisor position, and **14** promoted to Child Protective Field Support Analyst/Consultant. Of the **316** total advancements, CPI Supervisor promotions accounted for approximately 18 percent. Of the CPI Supervisor promotions, **19** promoted to Program Administrator, **11** promoted to Family Services Specialist, and **26** received promotions to other various positions such as CIRRT, Family Finder, MDT and other classes. The remaining **31** percent of promotions were either Sr. CPIs, Field Support Analysts/Consultants and Program Administrators promoting into other positions.

In January 2022 the Department launched a Career Ladder initiative to increase promotional opportunities, provide additional opportunities for professional development and advancement, and promote the retention of qualified employees. The Career Ladder offers an array of both in class and out of class advancement opportunities across multiple career pathways, which can be tailored to meet the individual needs of each employee. The three pathways are Performance, Specialty, and Supervisory. The advancement requirements vary according to the path and step chosen, but all include tenure requirements, a satisfactory performance evaluation, additional training, a personal SWOT analysis to be approved by the candidate's supervisor, and in most cases, a quality review threshold of at least 80%. Specialty training requirements provide expertise in a specific area of child welfare such as domestic violence or medical neglect. Supervisory training requirements include mentoring and coaching. All steps require Mental Health First Aid, an evidenced-based and nationally recognized training focused on understanding mental health and reducing stigma.

Currently, there are 483 employees participating in the Career Ladder, which represents approximately 75% of those eligible to participate. Of this number, 118 employees have already made advancements. Those advancements break down as follows: 20 Child Protective Investigators (CPIs), 8 CPI IIs, 43 CPI Supervisors, 33 CPI Supervisor IIs, 3 Field Support Analysts, 1 Field Support Consultant, 5 Senior Advanced CPIs, 3 Senior Specialist CPIs, and 2 Specialist CPIs. The Department continually evaluates Career Ladder processes and adjusts to maximize opportunities for professional development. In the next year we plan to incorporate CPI Supervisor Certification into our requirements.

Educational Levels and Background of Child Protective Investigative Staff

Statutory Requirements

Section 402.402(1), Florida Statutes, tasks the Department to recruit and hire persons qualified by their education and experience to perform social work functions. Preference is given to individuals having a social work degree with a second level preference given to individuals with a human service-related degree.

Educational Attainment of Employed Child Protective Investigative Staff

As of August 5, 2022, a People First data extract indicated there were 1608 filled child protective investigative positions); 1,243 were identified as having a baccalaureate degree; 132 were identified as having a master's degree; three were identified as having a doctorate degree; thirty-two were identified as educational data unavailable; and the remaining 198 were identified as high school graduates, having an associate's degree, or some years of college.

Of the 1608 FTE child protective investigative staff listed in the People First data set, 142 had a degree in social work (includes baccalaureates and master's degrees). The total active child protective investigative staff currently holding a degree in social work is 8.83 percent.

In June 2022, the First Lady launched the "Continue the Mission" initiative which aims to recruit veterans, military spouses, and former law enforcement officers for the roles of Child Protective Investigators, Adult Protective Investigators, and Case Managers. Military and law enforcement agencies instill values of strength, compassion, and skill and have experience to working with individuals in crisis. These skills are critical in helping children and families in crisis. Since the launch of the initiative, the Department has received 365 applications and has hired 17 veterans.

Department Efforts to Address Staff Stability

A skilled, stable workforce is fundamental to success of the state's child protection efforts and remains a key focus of the Department. In addition to implementing a Career Ladder model, the Department has taken several steps to support workforce growth and stability.

The Office of Well-Being was established to address overall well-being amongst all Department staff, with an additional goal to specifically address and prevent the impact of secondary traumatic stress and burnout amongst our CPI staff. This newly created office continues to activate an organizational shift towards prioritizing self-care and personal wellness.

The Department's fully implemented Quality Office plays a pivotal role in identifying initiatives to correct programmatic and systemic deficiencies. This team is focused on driving continuous quality improvement across the enterprise, with a strong initial focus on child welfare. To do this, the Quality Office is organized into three teams, quality reviews, advanced data analytics and performance improvement, and education and training. The child welfare quality review unit conducts reviews of child welfare cases in real time to increase insight into the quality of work performed by child protective investigations staff. Analyses are performed with information collected from these reviews and other data to inform performance improvement needs. The training team works to align with quality outcomes, help drive programmatic integration, and support a statewide approach to ensure

the CPI workforce is receiving critical, targeted training with multi-layered development opportunities. The Quality Assurance team also provides technical assistance/support to the field. These supports include 24/7 on call consultative support from a Quality Review Specialist and a hybrid schedule that promotes Quality Office staff being physically co-located with CPI staff.

Efforts are continuously made to ensure a reasonable workload. The Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) was modified in January 2022 for intakes where the children have been determined to be safe. In these “Safe FFAs,” documentation is condensed to save time, while ensuring thorough investigation and information contained in the electronic case file. A secondary aspect of this change was for CPI staff to begin the risk assessment at the initiation of the investigation, instead of at the end of the investigation. A review of the Children and Family Operating Procedures commenced in June 2022, contracted through the Casey Foundation, to determine if there are additional policy modifications that can be made to reduce workload for the CPI while continuing to ensure child safety.

In May 2022, the Secretary launched the Family Navigator resource. The Family Navigator, a trained clinician, will work alongside the CPI and family to quickly help assess, locate, and provide pivotal services to ensure the family unit is stabilized, safe, and on a pathway to building a resilient family unit. The Family Navigator resource will focus on supporting family well-being, understanding the needs of families contending with complex family dynamics, substance abuse and mental health crises. Through the Family Navigator, the Department will implement a statewide Behavioral Health Care model to immediately triage cases to provide “early engagement-early treatment” to help high-risk families. The Family Navigator will deploy strategies designed to rapidly engage families in services, work closely with providers to ensure service linkage, and provide follow up and support to monitor for effective delivery of services.

Another initiative which serves as a resource for CPI staff, spearheaded by the First Lady in 2022, is the Hope Florida – a Path to Prosperity. The program provides Care Navigators who assist families in identifying goals and removing barriers to economic self-sufficiency by partnering with community-based care partners, including private, faith-based institutions and nonprofit organizations.

Throughout 2022, the training department has been reviewing and revising the pre-service training for CPI and case management staff. The new pre-service training is scheduled to launch in the Spring of 2023. Additional support was provided for decision making at critical junctures through the addition of standardized multi-disciplinary staffings.

The Department’s Human Resources office has created dedicated recruitment teams in each region, facility, and specific headquarters’ offices, as well as a statewide advertising team, to align recruitment and selection functions through the use of existing positions to improve the hiring process for critical class positions (Abuse Counselors, Adult Protective Investigators, Child Protective Investigators, Economic Self-Sufficiency Specialist I’s, and Facilities’ Direct Care – Human Services Worker Is, IIs). This structure ensures a standardized statewide recruitment and selection approach through documented processes to include templates and tools utilized, that incorporates best practices. It is anticipated that meaningful impact will be gained via hiring improvement efficiencies that will positively affect recruitment efforts with the potential to lead to increased retention and allow the focus of supervisors to be directed to their direct reports and the clients being served.

The development of new initiatives to support child protective investigative staff in their work will remain one of the Department’s top priorities. Florida’s families deserve the most competent, experienced, and highly dedicated child protection staff. CPI staff are a critical asset for the role they play in keeping vulnerable children safe and achieving the best possible outcomes.