



NEW MEXICO
LEGISLATIVE
FINANCE
COMMITTEE

Child Welfare Workforce and Leveraging Federal Funds

Presentation to the Legislative Health and Human Services
Committee

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Legislative Finance Committee

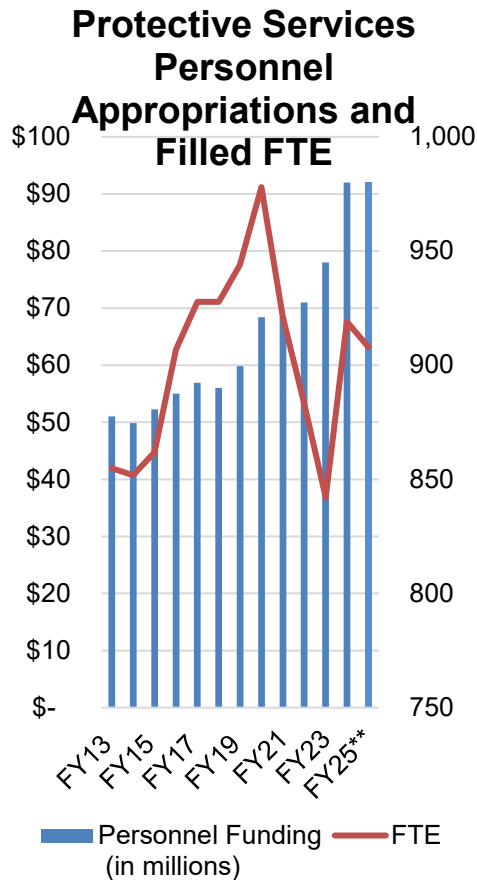
August 26, 2024



Child Welfare Workforce: New Mexico Data



New Mexico's Child Welfare Workforce



- FY25 personnel budget (\$92.5M) should fund ~ **962 Protective Services** employees at an average cost of \$98 thousand per employee; as of August 1, Protective Services had a **headcount of 908**.
- In total, Protective Services has ~**530 positions frontline case worker or supervisor positions**. Of these, ~75% are filled.
- CYFD made hiring progress in FY24, but turnover remains a challenge.

*As of June 1, 2024

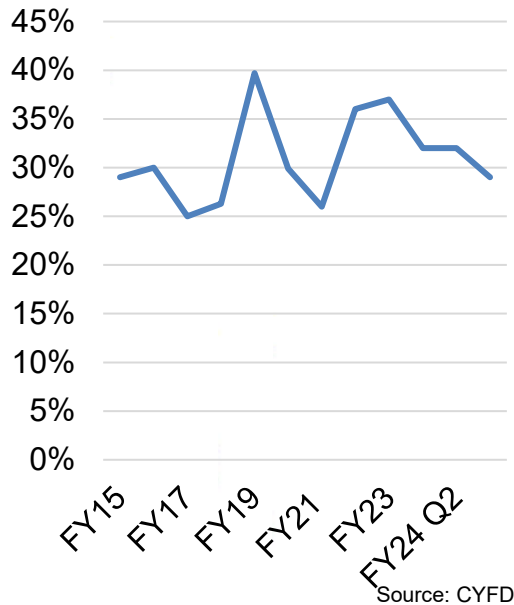
**As of August 1, 2024

Source: LFC Files and SPO Tool Report



Protective Services Turnover

Turnover Rate for Protective Service Workers at CYFD



CYFD 2023 Exit Survey Results: Most Frequently Reported Reasons for Leaving

Lack of support from leadership	19%
Overworked/workload	8%
New Opportunity	8%
Too many cases/backlog	7%
Mental health	7%
Personal reasons	5%
Burn out	4%
Underpaid	4%
Not feeling valued	4%
Environment/structure of the dept.	4%

Source: 2023 CYFD Exit Survey Report

- Nationally, turnover within child welfare agencies ranges between 20 percent and 30 percent, while roughly 12 percent is considered optimal.
- Nationally, a child welfare case worker remains on the job for an average of 1.8 years.
- CYFD Protective Services turnover has improved over the last year but remains ~30%**



CYFD Case Worker Compensation

CYFD Caseworker Compensation: 2023 Benchmark Study

CYFD Role	CYFD Avg. Salary (in thousands)	Market Comparison Base Salary 50th Percentile	NM Variance to Market 50th Percentile
CPS Investigation Case Worker	\$61.4	\$40.9	50%
CPS Placement Specialist	\$71.7	\$47.2	52%
CPS Placement Sr Wkr	\$64.7	\$56.8	14%
CPS Placement Supv	\$72.1	\$65.3	10%
CPS County Office Manager	\$91.4	\$98.8	-7%
CPS Perm Plg Case Wkr	\$52.5	\$41.4	27%
CPS Perm Plg Sr Wkr	\$62.7	\$49.9	26%

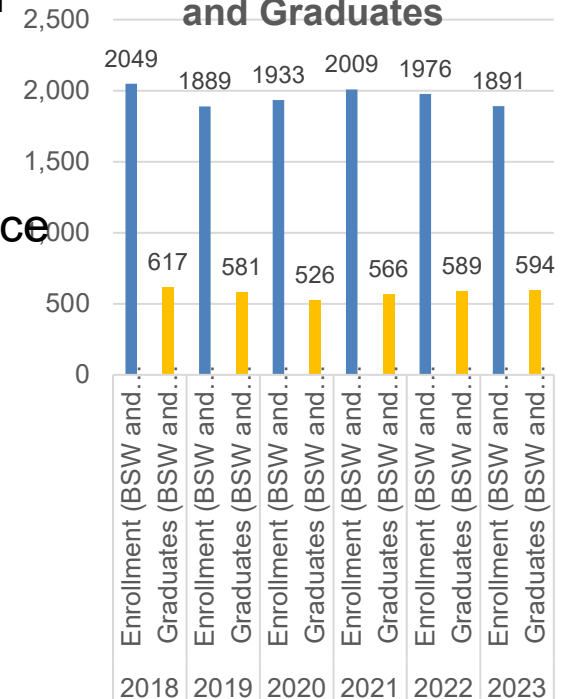
Source: 2023 Compensation Benchmarking Study



Social Workers in New Mexico

- According to the Child Welfare League of America, **social work degrees** are the most appropriate degrees for the child welfare field of practice and are **linked with better outcomes for children and families** and retention of child welfare staff.
- Roughly **7%** of the CYFD **Protective Services** workforce **has a social work degree**.
- If the state set a goal for 50% of filled front-line caseworkers and supervisors to hold a degree in social work, CYFD would need **~200 social workers** in Protective Services.

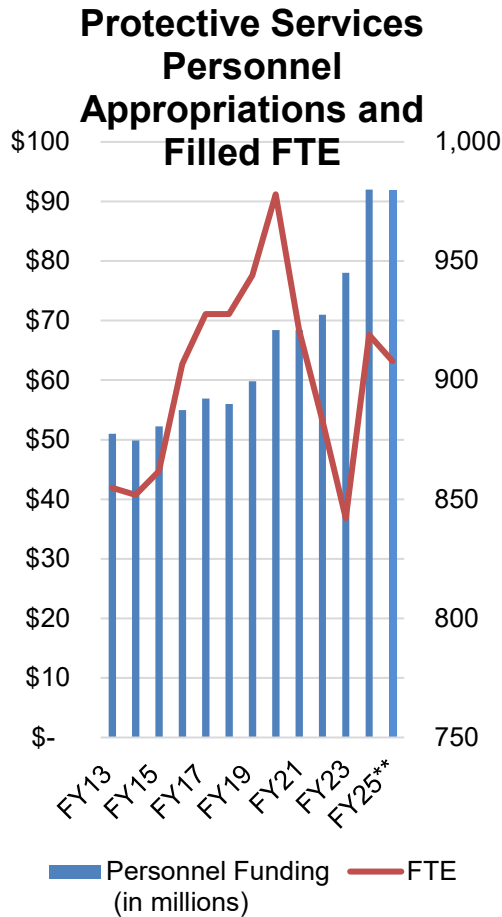
New Mexico School of Social Work Enrollment and Graduates



Investments to increase social work graduates:

- \$80 million for endowments at schools of social work, including \$10.5 million to create a school of social work at UNM
- School of social work budgets grew from \$5.6M in FY19 to \$7.2M in FY23 (29%); endowment revenue is anticipated to be \$3.2M, which would increase program budgets by 44% over FY23.

Legislative Investments in CYFD Workforce and Social Work



Recurring:

- **\$7.7 million in FY24** to fill at least 50 full-time positions in, which was the estimated level of funding needed to meet caseload benchmark targets at the time case worker salary increases.
- **\$432 thousand** to the Higher Education Department for the **CYFD employee student loan repayment.**

Special Appropriations:

- **\$3 million** to support CYFD's workforce development plan. As of the end of FY24 the appropriation had been largely unused and was reauthorized for FY25, though the Governor vetoed references to licensed social workers.
- Starting in FY25, **\$1.7 million** for a three-year pilot to incentivize attainment of **masters-level social work licensure** to develop and retain caseworkers.

*As of June 1, 2024

**As of August 1, 2024

Source: LFC Files and SPO Tool Report

Training a Child Welfare Workforce: Title IV-E Training



What is Title IV-E?

- Under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, states, territories, and tribes are entitled to **claim federal reimbursement** for a portion of the costs they incur providing **foster care, adoption assistance, and kinship-guardianship** assistance to children who meet federal eligibility.
- Historically, Title IV-E has covered three types of foster care-related costs:
 - “Room and board costs” of foster care (**foster care maintenance**)
 - **Administration** of the foster care program (case management, child placement, and licensing)
 - **Training** for child welfare agency staff, foster-adoptive-guardianship caregivers, and courts who are serving Title IV-E eligible children



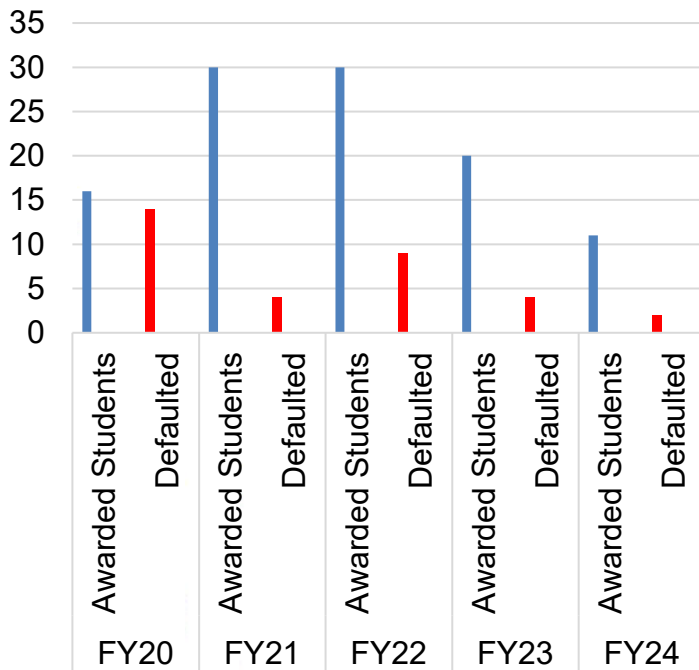
Education and Training: Title IV-E Stipend Programs

- IV-E will reimburse **75 percent of eligible training costs**, multiplied by a state's penetration rate. Nationally, university partners often provide the state's match through expenditures on faculty and university overhead costs.
- IV-E education programs (stipend programs) are delivered through **partnerships between state universities and child welfare agencies**.
- Programs provide **stipends or tuition reimbursement for BSW and MSW** students.
- Research suggests Title IV-E stipend programs successfully prepare licensed social workers to work in public child welfare, and **participants have longer tenures in child welfare than nonparticipants**.
- **Graduates are required to work in public or tribal child welfare roles** funded by Title IV-E for a specified period.



New Mexico's Title IV-E Stipend Program

Title IV-E Stipend Awards and Defaults at NMSU and WNMU



Note: Awards count unique awardees in a given year. Individual students may receive multiple semester awards across multiple years.

Source: LFC analysis of IHE data

- Title IV-E Stipend Programs in New Mexico: ENMU, NMHU, NMSU, and WNMU.
- The stipend amount and term of service varies by university partnership.
- Applications for the stipend program and Title IV-E reimbursement have declined over the last five years.
- CYFD reports a total of 33 stipend students worked at CYFD during the prior academic year.



Title IV-E Stipend Program Examples in Other States

Colorado's stipend program involves a statewide committee that meets regularly to oversee and improve the program, and child welfare agency employees are encouraged to apply for the program. In 2008, Colorado set a goal to expand the program by 200%, began standardizing partnership arrangements with universities, and holds annual program retreats and program evaluations.



In Texas, several stipend programs operated by schools of social work target workers within the state's child welfare agency, with different work requirements and stipend amounts for current employees to incentivize continued education.



Recommendations and Opportunities to Strengthen the Child Welfare Workforce

- CYFD, DFA, and the Legislature may consider opportunities to establish a performance measures related to the percent of front-line PS roles that are licensed social workers.
- CYFD could implement research-based hiring practices, such as realistic job previews.
- CYFD and schools of social work could re-design the Title IV-E contracts and strengthen partnerships to train social workers to work in child welfare, for example targeting Title IV-E stipend student recruitment among CYFD employees to obtain a BSW or MSW.
- CYFD should leverage special appropriations to pilot and evaluate strategies to increase the licensed social workers, including the \$3 million for workforce development appropriation and \$1.7 million to incentivize MSW attainment



Thank you

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<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Default>

