

Indiana Department of Child Services

Annual Staffing and Caseload Report

to the State Budget Committee and Legislative Council

State Fiscal Year 2021

(July 2020 – June 2021)



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Executive summary

The Indiana Department of Child Services is entrusted with the wellbeing of Hoosier families and children in crisis. Some of the most integral among the agency's staff members are family case managers (FCMs). They are the state's front line against child abuse and neglect. Maintaining manageable caseloads for these 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 2021, 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 2021 year-end snapshot

- 1,975 field FCM staff (individuals currently carrying a caseload).
- 150 FCMs in training.
- 92 additional FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13.
- 9 of 19 regions met the 12/12/13 standard.
- 14 of 19 regions had at least 90% of staff needed to meet the 12/12/13 standard.
- Statewide staffing level met 96% 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.

At the close of SFY 2020, DCS was in compliance with the 12/12/13 standard. The agency continued to trend in this direction, and staffing levels averaged 105% of need for nine months (July-March) of SFY2021. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, presented unprecedented challenges across child-welfare systems, and these impacted recruitment and retention efforts. At DCS, the nature of case-work changed dramatically for frontline workers. An assessment of a child's living situation cannot be done virtually when child-safety risks are present; as such, FCMs are required to visit homes in person. During the pandemic, they continued serving families and children via in-person service while many in the agency were permitted to utilize remote work locations. The availability of jobs allowing

for remote work compounded the problem as caseworkers sought positions that allowed not only for safer conditions but a better work/life balance during a time of so many uncertainties. These challenges were also present for our permanency workers – those FCMs who take on a case after an assessment finds abuse/neglect occurred. FCMs had to alter the means of coordinating services for families, coordinating with providers to determine which services could safely be offered remotely without putting children at risk. They fielded constant questions from families, providers and stakeholders as everyone sought to understand the safest way to move forward. These added pressures amplified the stress of an already challenging job and, not surprisingly, resulted in a setback in efforts to improve turnover.

Recruitment, retention and training of family case managers

The Indiana Department of Child Services is more than 4,400 strong, staffed by people committed to the well-being of Hoosier families and children. Of those employees, more than 2,300 are family case managers, or FCMs, whose on-the-ground work offers 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. Their dedication helps to prevent future maltreatment as families rebuild and learn to provide a safe environment for the loved ones in their care. The spread of COVID-19 in SFY 2021 added stressors to this already challenging work by changing practice for many frontline staff. Employees were faced with rapid policy and practice changes over the course of the year as the agency worked to adapt to the continually changing environment.

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 as well as retain those who have already dedicated themselves to this cause. Part of this process requires DCS to assure frontline staff members carry manageable caseloads.

Recruitment and retention

One of the DCS talent acquisition team's goals in SFY 2021 was to better support field and human resources. The talent acquisition manager visited all 18 DCS regions (virtually as needed because of COVID-19 risks) and worked with legal and field operations to review training in SAP SuccessFactors, the agency's online talent management/recruitment system. These efforts not only ensure staff are up to date on the technology but improve the candidate experience by ensuring candidates are categorized properly in a timely manner. The team also sought to build and grow relationships with DCS executives and managers by sharing a quarterly talent acquisition report, helping agency leadership understand ongoing efforts to recruit and retain the best and brightest. The HR team is data-driven, using resources such as Tableau, SAP Advanced Analytics, and PeopleSoft queries to highlight the success of these initiatives.

SFY 2021 presented some challenges to recruitment efforts, as DCS competed with employers who were able to allow remote work with duties that presented fewer COVID-19 safety risks for workers. Additionally, many job fairs were canceled to prevent the spread of the virus. However, DCS took full advantage of virtual opportunities provided by universities, attending 11 events in 2020 and 14 events as of July 2021. Additionally, DCS forged relationships with diverse higher-learning institutions (e.g., Calumet College, Kentucky State College). DCS also hosted several virtual job fairs for Madison and Marion counties. By summer of 2021, DCS had held 10 job fairs resulting in 239 interviews and 84 hires.

The HR team has tried to combat new-hire turnover by better engaging and celebrating new arrivals to the agency. New hires are now provided celebratory graphics announcing their new

position to share on social media (i.e., LinkedIn). These posts promote positive feedback, encourage conversation among existing and incoming employees, and boast a high impression rate, highlighting DCS as a favorable employer.

HR expanded recruitment efforts in SFY 2021 by sponsoring postings on external job banks such as Indeed. This has increased application numbers in high-volume offices that need extra support. The division also utilized quarterly sponsored Facebook posts in 2020 and networked with Cumulus Media to broadcast radio ads promoting open positions. HR has also utilized free external job banks such as Handshake, Ascend Network, EmployIndy, Symplcity, LinkedIn and Facebook to further engage candidates. The DCS LinkedIn account grew followers by 40% overall from the previous year, double the division goal.

DCS HR has also been working with the DCS communications team to align social media recruiting efforts with the agency's existing presence on Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. The HR team has utilized new "Day in the Life" videos to highlight the important work done by agency employees. These recruitment videos depict positions in the agency positively but realistically. In SFY 2021, videos were developed for the family case manager position and intake specialist (hotline) position. This strategy has a twofold goal of not only attracting candidates but improving turnover by providing a better understanding of what the position entails. DCS HR has collaborated weekly with the State Personnel Department communications team to highlight certain DCS positions on state of Indiana social media sites, which have a large following and better chance of attracting local talent. Several hiring processes were also improved over the last year. DCS adjusted its interview guides to ensure better vetting of candidates while

reducing interview times. A virtual reality headset showcasing realistic FCM scenarios was also introduced in 2020, although the pandemic hindered its use. This remains a great tool to show candidates what the position entails, potentially weeding out candidates before they are chosen for hire, and DCS anticipates using it more in the coming year. In early 2021, an event to standardize the FCM process was held. Attendees found that hiring practices were inconsistent among field staff across all regions, counties and even within teams. To address this, a simple step-by-step process for hiring managers to follow was developed.

Training

FCMs receive specialized training to ensure they are thoroughly prepared to assess allegations of child abuse and neglect. FCMs go through a comprehensive training program, including 12 weeks of training before taking on a full caseload. Incoming FCMs are initially classified as FCM trainees, receiving a \$35,776 annual salary. The starting salary for an FCM is \$40,092 once the employee graduates from the 12-week training program.

The FCM training program comprises 26 classroom days and 32 local-office “transfer-of-learning” days where trainees apply what they have learned. In addition to the classroom training, 28 computer-assisted trainings (CATs) were developed for these new workers to complete at their local offices. The training ensures new workers receive ample time in the local office to gain hands-on experience relative to the area where they’ll be working. New DCS employees are not immediately handed an entire caseload. Incoming employees take on smaller caseloads that are built upon as their comfort level grows.

DCS begins a new training cohort every two weeks. In the last fiscal year, DCS started 27 cohorts, and 811 cohort members graduated.

DCS continues to focus on leadership trainings for both directors and supervisors. The agency has provided workshops for supervisors and directors including the following: Building a Healthy Work Environment; Meaningful Recognition; Cultural Humility; and True Collaboration.

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 HR 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 nine counties. Additionally, the department created the central office region to encompass FCMs from the institutional assessment unit and the collaborative care unit, for a total of 19 regions.

With the switch to SAP SuccessFactors in 2019, DCS moved from regional-based job postings to county-based postings to allow each manager in the regions to have the ability to pipeline candi-

dates for when they do have allocations and to collaboratively share candidates with other nearby counties. This move also allows the candidate more flexibility in choosing their desired location.

Methodology to compute caseloads

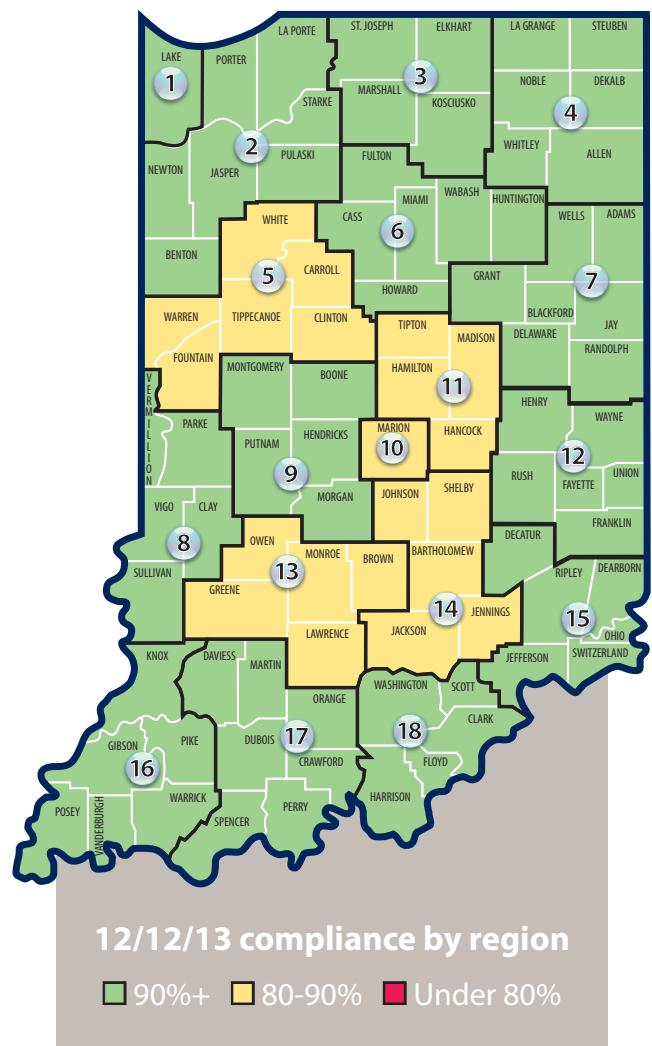
There is no universal caseload standard governing all states, and most states do not have caseload standards codified in statute. Moreover, many states weigh cases differently in calculating caseload compliance, which means that case counts are not a function of just volume, but also complexity.

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

- Removes from the 12/12/13 caseload analysis those specialized FCMs who do not carry caseloads (E.g., hotline intake specialists, foster care and relative care specialists and staff in training).
- Utilizes a six-month caseload average to measure compliance.
- Highlights current caseload trends, providing a more accurate representation that allows the agency to make better staffing and management decisions.
- Weights cases based on the work required to perform standard case management tasks (E.g., a residential placement is 50% of the value of a traditional CHINS case, as most case-management functions are assumed by the residential facility).

Compliance with standards and plans to reduce caseloads

SFY 2021 reflects a slight downward trend in the number of cases handled by DCS. At the end of the state fiscal year, DCS had a total of 18,533 cases (including informal adjustments, collaborative care and CHINS), compared with 21,200 open cases the prior year.



At the end of SFY 2021, the agency staffing level was at 96% of need, with nine of 19 regions meeting the 12/12/13 standard.

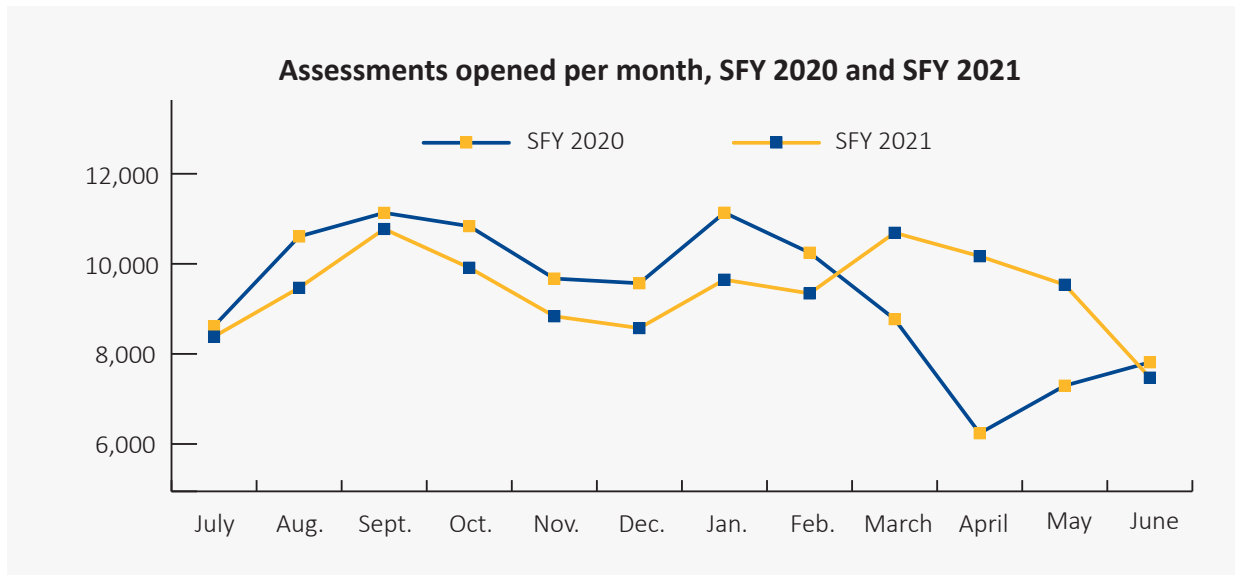
This number is calculated in each region thus: Six-month average number of FCMs needed minus the number of FCMs already deployed to the field or still in training. FCM trainees are removed from the calculation because they represent existing workers that will be able to carry caseloads in the near future.

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 2021, as evidenced by the range of assessments between the highest month total (10,774) and the lowest (7,473).

Assessments opened per month and change from SFY 2020

- **July 2020:** 8,385 (-2.70%)
- **August 2020:** 9,468 (-10.75%)
- **September 2020:** 10,774 (-3.22%)
- **October 2020:** 9,914 (-8.52%)
- **November 2020:** 8,836 (-8.65%)
- **December 2020:** 8,575 (-10.41%)
- **January 2021:** 9,648 (-13.36%)
- **February 2021:** 9,343 (-8.83%)
- **March 2021:** 10,690 (+21.87%)
- **April 2021:** 10,169 (+63.02%)
- **May 2021:** 9,537 (+30.86%)
- **June 2021:** 7,473 (-4.36%)



Effective and efficient delivery of child protection services

SFY 2021 brought with it unprecedented challenges, but DCS remained steadfast in its efforts to protect families and children. The workforce adapted ably to ever-changing conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic and celebrated a number of successes along the way. They include:

- Facilitating a national-best number of adoptions.
- Continuing to decrease the number of children placed in residential care.
- Improving relationships with foster parents.
- Elevating the voice of those with experience in the child welfare system through Lunch with a Leader, an open forum connecting older youth to DCS leadership.

- Eliminating enrollment barriers for parents who need help getting child support.
- Co-hosting a statewide virtual event with the Administration for Children and Families.
- Introducing virtual visits with families when possible to ensure children and their care-givers remained connected throughout the pandemic.

One thing stayed constant amidst all the changes – the agency’s focus on providing improved service to the families and children it serves.

Hotline

The Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is staffed by trained FCM intake specialists and at least one supervisor on every shift, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. FCM intake specialists ask probing questions to obtain comprehensive information about each potential case, including factors that could impact worker safety. They gather information from callers, enter these details into the DCS intake system and note whether the information provided meets statutory criteria for an assessment. The local DCS office where the child is located makes a final decision whether to open an assessment.

While the hotline has generally seen an increase in reports year over year, there has been a recent decrease in reports taken the past two years.

- SFY 2016: 211,502
- SFY 2017: 235,609

- SFY 2018: 247,658
- SFY 2019: 240,756
- SFY 2020: 225,872
- SFY 2021: 230,246

From SFY 2015 to SFY 2019, the hotline received a 20% increase in reports. This is believed to be due in large part to increased awareness of the hotline. In SFY 2021, the hotline saw a 4% reduction in reports compared to SFY 2019. The reductions seen over the past couple of years are presumably due to COVID-19 mitigation measures that occurred across the state (including instituting virtual learning). As such mitigation measures started to relax during SFY 2021, the hotline saw a 2% increase in reports compared to SFY 2020.

During SFY 2021, as part of the agency’s Lean transformation, many hotline processes were updated. Changes were made to the “Intake Guidance Tool,” the questioning guide used by intake specialists. The methodology for processing certain reports was streamlined. Processes that were determined to provide no value were eliminated. Lastly, the automated prompts that callers hear were updated to include an option to connect themselves or a family they know to resources, specifically to a local Community Partners for Child Safety provider. These home-based case-management services will connect families to resources to strengthen the family and prevent child abuse and neglect. This program is free to the family.

Exhibit 1

12/12/13 Staffing and Caseload Report, State Fiscal Year 2021

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
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Statewide

Total	2,067	1,975	92	96%	150	(58)
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Central Office

Total	79	89	(10)	113%	0	(10)
Collaborative Care	67	71	(4)	106%	0	(4)
Institutional Unit	12	18	(6)	150%	0	(6)

Region 1

Total	122	126	(4)	103%	7	(11)
Lake	122	126	(4)	103%	7	(11)

Region 2

Total	75	80	(5)	107%	4	(9)
Jasper	5	5	0	100%	1	(1)
LaPorte	29	29	0	100%	0	0
Newton	3	4	(1)	133%	0	(1)
Porter	23	23	0	100%	3	(3)
Pulaski	4	6	(2)	150%	0	(2)
Benton	2	3	(1)	150%	0	(1)
Starke	9	10	(1)	111%	0	(1)

¹Average number of caseload-carrying field FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13 standard as of 6/30/21

²Number of caseload-carrying field FCMs as of 6/30/21

³Additional FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13 standard as of 6/30/21 (Column 2 minus Column 3)

⁴Percentage of staff need that was filled as of 6/30/21 (Column 3 divided by Column 2)

⁵The number of FCMs in training as of 6/30/21

⁶Additional FCMs needed to meet 12/12/13 standard, after taking into account those currently in training, as of 6/30/21 (Column 4 minus Column 6)

Note: Staff numbers are rounded to the nearest 1 person. Some figures may be slightly off because of rounding.



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
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Region 3

Total	140	131	9	94%	8	1
Elkhart	37	27	10	73%	8	2
Kosciusko	17	15	2	88%	0	2
Marshall	9	12	(3)	133%	0	(3)
St. Joseph	77	77	0	100%	0	0

Region 4

Total	166	174	(8)	105%	6	(14)
Allen	123	124	(1)	101%	6	(7)
Dekalb	10	13	(3)	130%	0	(3)
LaGrange	7	6	1	86%	0	1
Noble	12	15	(3)	125%	0	(3)
Steuben	7	7	0	100%	0	0
Whitley	7	9	(2)	129%	0	(2)

Region 5

Total	66	57	9	86%	11	(2)
Carroll	4	4	0	100%	0	0
Clinton	6	9	(3)	150%	0	(3)
Fountain/Warren*	6	7	(1)	117%	0	(1)
Tippecanoe	42	31	11	74%	9	2
White	8	6	2	75%	2	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
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Region 6

Total	73	79	(6)	108%	5	(11)
Cass	9	7	2	78%	2	0
Fulton	7	9	(2)	129%	0	(2)
Howard	29	31	(2)	107%	2	(4)
Miami	9	11	(2)	122%	0	(2)
Huntington	10	11	(1)	110%	1	(2)
Wabash	9	10	(1)	111%	0	(1)

Region 7

Total	113	110	3	97%	10	(7)
Adams	11	12	(1)	109%	0	(1)
Blackford	5	6	(1)	120%	0	(1)
Delaware	44	37	7	84%	7	0
Grant	29	30	(1)	103%	2	(3)
Wells	10	12	(2)	120%	0	(2)
Jay	6	7	(1)	117%	0	(1)
Randolph	8	6	2	75%	1	1

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
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Region 8

Total	98	89	9	91%	10	(1)
Clay	12	11	1	92%	3	(2)
Parke	4	4	0	100%	0	0
Sullivan	9	12	(3)	133%	0	(3)
Vermillion	8	9	(1)	113%	2	(3)
Vigo	65	53	12	82%	5	7

Region 9

Total	78	91	(13)	117%	3	(16)
Boone	12	14	(2)	117%	0	(2)
Hendricks	19	18	1	95%	3	(2)
Montgomery	16	21	(5)	131%	0	(5)
Morgan	21	25	(4)	119%	0	(4)
Putnam	10	13	(3)	130%	0	(3)

Region 10

Total	380	317	63	83%	33	30
Marion East	91	77	14	85%	11	3
Marion North	88	73	15	83%	7	8
Marion South	84	82	2	98%	4	(2)
Marion West	117	85	32	73%	11	21

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
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Region 11

Total	122	104	18	85%	6	12
Hamilton	30	26	4	87%	2	2
Hancock	18	18	0	100%	3	(3)
Madison	70	57	13	81%	1	12
Tipton	4	3	1	75%	0	1

Region 12

Total	54	52	2	96%	6	(4)
Fayette	9	8	1	89%	0	1
Franklin	4	3	1	75%	1	0
Henry	14	18	(4)	129%	3	(7)
Rush	5	5	0	100%	0	0
Union	1	2	(1)	200%	0	(1)
Wayne	21	16	5	76%	2	3

Region 13

Total	74	59	15	80%	12	3
Brown	4	5	(1)	125%	0	(1)
Greene	11	9	2	82%	0	2
Lawrence	19	15	4	79%	1	3
Monroe	33	23	10	70%	8	2
Owen	8	7	1	88%	3	(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
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Region 14

Total	91	80	11	88%	4	7
Bartholomew	30	19	11	63%	3	8
Jackson	12	15	(3)	125%	0	(3)
Jennings	12	13	(1)	108%	0	(1)
Johnson	24	19	5	79%	1	4
Shelby	13	14	(1)	108%	0	(1)

Region 15

Total	53	57	(4)	108%	4	(8)
Dearborn	11	10	1	91%	1	0
Decatur	10	16	(6)	160%	0	(6)
Jefferson	13	16	(3)	123%	2	(5)
Ohio	2	2	0	100%	0	0
Ripley	13	9	4	69%	1	3
Switzerland	4	4	0	100%	0	0

Region 16

Total	116	118	(2)	102%	7	(9)
Gibson	8	9	(1)	113%	0	(1)
Knox	18	22	(4)	122%	0	(4)
Pike	4	4	0	100%	0	0
Posey	10	10	0	100%	0	0
Vanderburgh	61	59	2	97%	6	(4)
Warrick	15	14	1	93%	1	0

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
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Region 17

Total	59	63	(4)	107%	3	(7)
Crawford	7	9	(2)	129%	0	(2)
Daviess	10	11	(1)	110%	1	(2)
Dubois	9	8	1	89%	1	0
Martin	3	4	(1)	133%	0	(1)
Orange	11	12	(1)	109%	0	(1)
Perry	9	8	1	89%	1	0
Spencer	10	11	(1)	110%	0	(1)

Region 18

Total	107	99	8	93%	11	(3)
Clark	27	27	0	100%	1	(1)
Floyd	41	35	6	85%	6	0
Harrison	10	10	0	100%	1	(1)
Scott	22	20	2	91%	2	0
Washington	7	7	0	100%	1	(1)

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

