



"CHILDREN ARE THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE AND ITS BEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE." --JOHN F. KENNEDY

Stats—2013

On December 31, 2013 there were 3,903 children in out-of-home care in Nebraska, most of whom had experienced a significant level of trauma prior to their removal from their parental home.

38% of children in out-of-home care had re-entered out-of-home care one or more times.

40% of the children in out of home care had experienced 4 or more placement changes while in foster care over their lifetime.



State of Nebraska



**Foster Care Review Office
Kim Hawekotte J.D., Director
521 S. 14th, Suite 401
Lincoln NE 68508
402.471.4420
www.fcro.nebraska.gov**



History

Foster Care Review in Nebraska began in 1982 when the Nebraska Foster Care Review Act was passed. The agency is separate from the judicial branch and from the Department of Health and Human Services so it can assess, report, and make recommendations without any influence from other agencies or departments. regarding the child's permanency plan, services for the child and family, and the appropriateness and safety of the child's placement .

Mission Statement

The Foster Care Review Office's mission is to ensure that the best interests of children in foster care are being met through external citizen review, by monitoring facilities that house the children and youth, maintaining up-to-date data on a statewide tracking system, utilizing legal standing when necessary, and by disseminating data and recommendations through an Annual Report.

Citizen Reviews Make a Difference

Studies have shown that children who receive citizen reviews are as much as 3.9 times more likely to find permanency when compared to children similar in every way except not reviewed.

What Does The FCRO Do?

The FCRO is mandated to maintain an independent tracking system of all children in out-of-home placement in the State. The tracking system is used to provide information about the number of children entering and leaving care as well as other data regarding children's needs and trends in foster care, including data collected as part of the review process, and for internal processes.

The FCRO was established as an independent agency to review the case plans of children in foster care. The purpose of the reviews is to assure that appropriate goals have been set for the child, that realistic time limits have been set for the accomplishment of these goals, that efforts are being made by all parties to achieve these goals, that appropriate services are being delivered to the child and/or his or her family, and that long-range planning has been done to move the child to a permanent home where he or she can grow and thrive. This is done by utilizing multi-disciplinary boards of trained citizen reviewers.

The FCRO is to provide information and direct reporting to the courts, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Legislature regarding the foster care system in Nebraska; and to provide oversight of the foster care system.

The FCRO is also charged by statute with promoting and encouraging stability and continuity in foster care. This is done on the case level, through the review process, and on a systemic level using aggregate data gathered during the tracking and review processes.

Local Review Boards

Each board consists of 6-8 community volunteers who are diverse in professions, race, ethnicities, age, gender, and economic status. These persons successfully completed pre-service training and receive continuing education on relevant topics.

Members of local foster care review boards gather monthly to review the cases of 5-11 children who are in out-of-home care.

The review board discusses the issues that may be present and makes recommendations for further actions regarding each case. E.g., The board members determine whether or not the child's permanency plan is being met and is appropriate, whether or not appropriate services are being offered to the child, whether or not the child is safe, and whether or not the child's best interests are being met.

Once a case is reviewed, a formal document is written by FCRO staff and submitted to the judge and other legal parties. If a case continues to need attention, staff may take a number of additional steps to address identified issues.