

Nebraska Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: November 2024

State Population (2023 Census estimate)

1 – 1,999,999 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2022)

6,000 – 9,999

- Adoption Assistance Caseload — 5,452
- Guardian Assistance Caseload — 813
- Total Assistance Caseload — 6,265

State Administration Type

State administered

Pre-Service Training

Prospective foster and adoptive families can choose between the 30-hour Trauma-Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanency (TIPS-MAPP) or Deciding Together (DT) trainings, available online or in person through various agencies. Families wishing to adopt a child must complete an additional 16 hours of adoption-related topics before finalization. If they intend to adopt a child with higher medical needs, they must take an additional four hours of training on how to meet the child's needs.

Relative caregivers are encouraged to complete a five-hour online foster parent training via the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to become licensed as a relative foster home.

Families pursuing guardianship should complete one of the above trainings, depending on their relative status, and are also recommended to undergo training via the Office of Public Guardian. This is a three-hour training required by statute; however, the courts may choose to waive this requirement.

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

The Nebraska DHHS contracts with Nebraska Children's Home Society (NCHS) to provide post-permanency support to adoptive and guardianship families through the Families Forever program. Families can use the service until the child turns 21. Services include:



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- **Pre-permanency supports** — Families seeking to adopt or gain guardianship of a child in care can receive one-on-one services, including training and resource referrals. After finalizing the adoption or guardianship, they can opt for continued post-permanency services.
- **Assessment** — Families Forever staff conduct a formal review of the child's and family's strengths and needs to determine if any services or treatment plans are necessary. Assessments include the nine-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ9), Family Check-up, Everyday Parenting, and Mobility Mentoring®. These assessments are completed at intake and discharge by the staff working directly with the family and help guide the case management services provided.
- **Case management** — Families Forever staff provide in-home support and information, make service referrals, help build informal respite support, and connect families to support groups and training. Case management is structured on a tier system:
 - **Tier 1:** Weekly home visits in months one and two.
 - **Tier 2:** Bi-weekly home visits in months three and four.
 - **Tier 3:** Monthly visits in months five and six.The goal is to help the family achieve self-sufficiency with a holistic approach.
- **24-hour telephone support** — Families Forever subcontracts with ProtoCALL to provide 24-hour telephone support to families. Trained mental health professionals answer calls and provide guidance as needed, refer callers to other resources available in the family's community, and connect them with Families Forever staff during regular business hours.
- **Support groups** — Both virtual and in-person support groups are available. In-person groups meet in Grand Island, Lincoln, and Omaha, offering childcare and dinner for attendees. Two staff members facilitate these groups, with topics driven by attendees' interests. Virtual groups are available for families in rural areas or those unable to attend in person.
- **Information and referral** — Families Forever shares information with families through its website, blog, weekly emails, and digital quarterly newsletters. At intake, every family receives a bibliography. Families Forever has also developed a lifebook, which is used during case management. All families are encouraged to create one.
- **Mentoring** — Staff pair families currently receiving post-permanency services with a mentor who has lived experience. This service ends when the case plan closes,





although the relationship often continues informally. Mentors are trained, receive a monthly stipend, and can serve up to three families at a time.

- **Training** — Both virtual and in-person trainings are available to all families, regardless of whether they are receiving other post-permanency services. Families Forever uses the C.A.S.E. W.I.S.E. Up!® program for parents and children. Other training topics include openness in adoption, lifebooks, seven core issues, and attachment-related topics.
- **Events** — Families Forever hosts in-person events twice a year for families currently receiving services. The location and duration of these events vary. Families Forever also provides a conference every other year for families and professionals across the state to attend. The location and topics for the event vary for each conference.

The program served 180 families in fiscal year 2023.

For more information, visit <https://nchs.org/families-forever/>

Geographic Area Covered

The program is statewide and ensures staff are available for in-person or virtual visits as needed.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

- All families who adopted from the state's foster care system
- All families who adopted from foster care in other states, territories, or tribes
- All families who adopted through intercountry adoption
- All families who adopted through private adoption
- All families who have guardianship of a child from foster care
- Other (listed below)
 - Families living outside of Nebraska if the child or youth was in Nebraska's custody at the time of adoption or guardianship finalization

Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

None

Accessibility

Information not available





Outreach and Engagement

DHHS provides Families Forever with a monthly list of families who have finalized adoptions or guardianships. The program attempts to contact each family at least three times by phone to share information about services. If phone contact is not possible, a packet of information is mailed to the family.

All families are added to a mailing list to receive weekly emails and quarterly digital newsletters. Families who have used services receive follow-up contact within 30 days, 60 days, and one year after discharge.

DHHS shares information on Families Forever services with managed care organizations and other professionals across the state who come into contact or work with adoptive and guardianship families to maximize the use of these services.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

Through a contract or grant with one private agency

Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

Nebraska Children's Home Society provides all post-permanency services statewide.

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

DHHS regional staff send an annual letter to adoptive families that includes a list of standardized questions, such as if the child still lives in the home, if the child's needs have change, or if the family needs to make changes to the subsidy. Adoptive parents may request changes at the time of this annual letter or at any point there is a change in the child's needs, family circumstances, or legal requirements. Requests must be made in writing to the Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker within 45 days of making the request, with supporting information.

Guardianship families may also request changes in the child's subsidy depending on the type of guardianship they have in place. Guardianship families follow the same process as adoptive families by making a request in writing via the adoption Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker. Those with state-funded guardianship may request changes if one of two criteria is met, including if a child is 13 years of age or older or if the child has been in the home for a period of five years or more.





Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

Administration staff receive a monthly list of children and youth who have reentered custody, and this data is tracked and used to inform policies and programming. At times, staff may also become aware of children and youth reentering care via annual subsidy letters, children placed in group/psychiatric treatment facilities, or through the courts. When this occurs, these families are referred to Forever Families for additional services and support.

Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2023)

\$5 – 9 million

Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2023)

1. State funds

