

Office of the Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare

Jennifer A. Carter, Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare

State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

402-471-4211
Toll Free - 855-460-6784

oig.legislature.ne.gov
oig@leg.ne.gov

Photo by [Michael Savers](#), licensed by CC 2.0





Association of Inspectors General

Inspector General Values

OIGs Promote:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Good Government
- High Performance

"...The public expects OIGs to hold government official accountable. This public expectation is best served by inspectors general when they follow the basic principles of integrity, objectivity, independence, confidentiality, professionalism, competence, courage, trust, honesty, fairness, forthrightness, public accountability and respect..."

-- Statement of Principles for Offices of Inspector General, Association of Inspectors General

Overview of the OIG of Child Welfare

- Created by the Legislature in 2012
 - One of 18 recommendations of a study of child welfare privatization - LR 37 (2011)
 - The OIG of Child Welfare was created to “[e]stablish a full-time program of investigation and performance review to provide increased accountability and oversight” of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems with the purpose of facilitating reform.
- Housed in the legislative branch, within the Ombudsman’s office
- Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§43-4301 – 43-4332.

Role of the OIG

The OIG provides accountability for and may conduct investigations involving the following entities:

- Department of Health and Human Services (for both the Division of Children and Family Services and the Division of Public Health)
- Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
- The Crime Commission's Juvenile Justice Programs
- Private agencies and service providers in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems under state contract
- Licensed child care facilities
- Foster parents
- Juvenile detention and staff secure detention centers

Role of the OIG

The OIG provides accountability through investigations, reviews, system monitoring, and recommendations for system improvement.

- Investigate deaths and serious injury to children
- Look into allegations of misconduct and violations of law by individuals and agencies serving children and families
- Identify systemic issues and needed policy changes
- Assist in improving agency and system operations and outcomes

OIG Operations

- IG is appointed for a five year term by the Ombudsman with approval of the Chair of the Executive Board of the Legislature and the chair of the Health and Human Services Committee.
- The IG must become certified as an IG by the national Association of Inspectors General within two years of their appointment.
- The OIG of Child Welfare has two Assistant Inspectors General who are largely responsible for the investigations. The office also shares an Intake Specialist with the OIG of Corrections.

OIG Operations

- The majority of the OIG's work is determined by information provided to the office in one of four ways.
- Critical Incidents
 - The Department of Health and Human Services, the juvenile services division of the Administrative Office of Probation, and each juvenile detention facility are required to notice the OIG on cases of death and serious injury to youth, as well as all allegations of sexual abuse.
 - For DHHS, this includes a requirement that Public Licensing report any deaths or serious injuries that occur at any child cares or other licensed facilities, as well as allegations of sexual abuse in residential child caring agencies.
- Complaints
 - The OIG also receives complaints by phone, email, website, walk-ins, and through cases referred from Senators.
- Grievances
- Information

FY 2021-2022 Annual Report

During Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (FY 21-22) starting July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, the OIG received 451 total intakes comprised of:

1. 234 Critical Incident Reports;
2. 138 complaints;
3. 29 reports of or requests for information; and,
4. 50 grievances and accompanying findings from DHHS.

OIG Operations

- Intake Process
 - After receiving an intake, the OIG assesses every incident report, complaint, grievance, or information report.
 - The preliminary review includes a thorough document review and collateral contacts if necessary.
 - The OIG then decides if it has jurisdiction over the incident or complaint, whether or not a full investigation is required by statute, and what additional actions may be appropriate.

Year in Review

- Investigation and monitoring of the Eastern Service Area contract with Saint Francis Ministries, Inc.
- Placement concerns
- YRTC monitoring through statutory reports
- Legislation
- YRTC Advisory Group and other Committees and Commissions
- Juvenile Room Confinement Report

Looking Ahead

- Increase in Mandatory Investigations of Serious Injury to Children
 - 13 reports of serious injury with 10 resulting in a mandatory investigation
- Alternative Response Cases and Oversight
 - Four of the 10 serious injury investigations involve Alternative Response cases
- Placement Availability and Stability
- Staffing and Caseloads
- LB 1173 Child Welfare System Transformation Plan
- Challenges with Probation Investigations

FY 21-22 Data

Incidents Reported to the OIG	
Reporting Party	Number of Incidents
CFS	61
Public Licensing	101
Private Providers	23
Juvenile Probation	49
Total	234

Other Types of Reports Made to the OIG	
Type of Intake	Number Reported
Complaints	138
Reports of Information	29
DHHS Grievances	50
Total	217

FY 21-22 Data

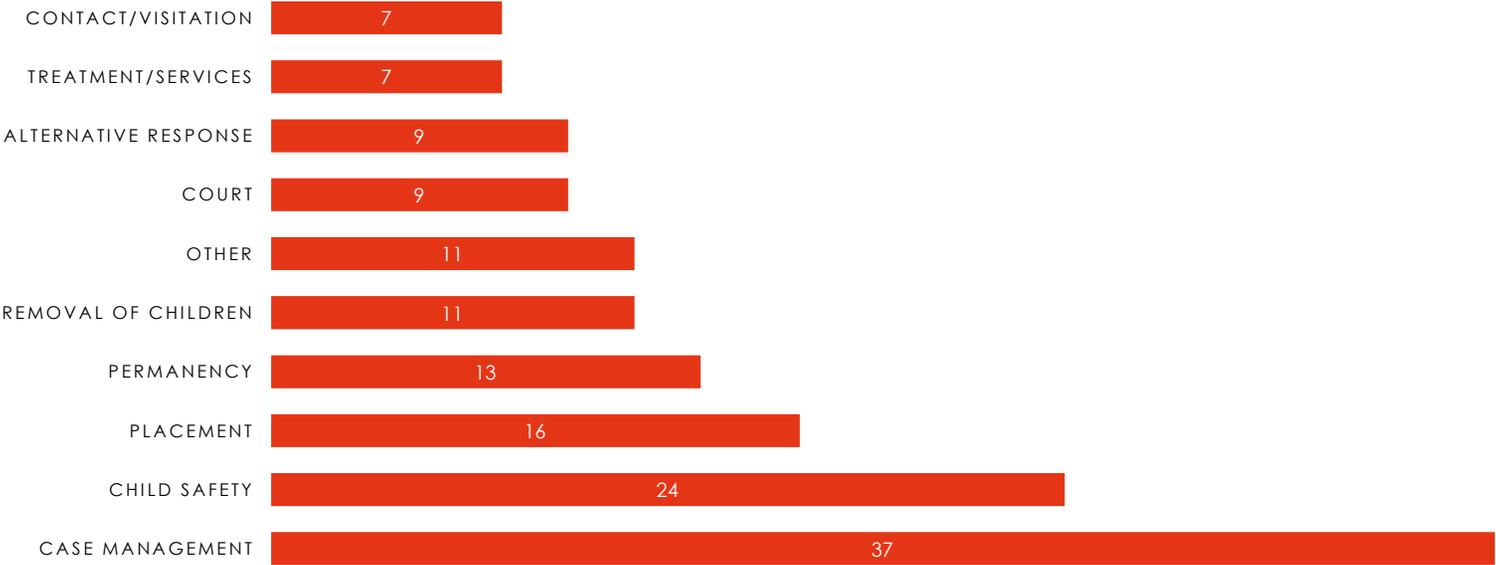
Deaths & Serious Injuries Reported to the OIG FY 20-21 COMPARED TO FY 21-22					
FY 20-21	Deaths	Serious Injuries	FY 21-22	Deaths	Serious Injuries
DHHS	20	8	DHHS HS	11	13
Juvenile Probation	10	0	Juvenile Probation	1	0

Mandatory Investigations from DHHS: FY 21-22	
Deaths	2
Serious Injury	10

OIG Pending Investigations as of End of FY 21-22 (June 30, 2022)			
	Reported by DHHS		Reported by Juvenile Probation
Death	6		18
Serious Injury	12		0
			Total Pending Investigations: 36

FY 21-22 Data

FY 21-22 COMPLAINTS CATEGORIZED BY ISSUE 138 TOTAL



FY 21-22 Data

Total Reports of Alleged Sexual Abuse by Fiscal Year & Reporting Agency			
Fiscal Year	Total	Reported by DHHS	Reported by Juvenile Probation
17-18	45	26	19
18-19	41	31	10
19-20	46	15	31
20-21	69	14	55
21-22	70	21	48

Referrals to the OIG

- Walk-Ins or Appointments
- Email: OIG@leg.ne.gov
- Online complaint form: oig.legislature.ne.gov
- Phone: 402-471-4211 or 855-460-6784

Thank You!

Questions?

Contact our office:

Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare

402-471-4211

oig@leg.ne.gov