



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

SUSAN G. OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for Human Services

March 8, 2023

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES,**

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS,  
SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

**SUBJECT: Child Welfare Workforce Study**

**REQUIRED ACTION:** \_\_\_ Immediate  Time Sensitive \_\_\_ Information Only

The child welfare system in North Carolina and nationally is experiencing a crisis in workforce recruitment and retention. Statewide, the annual turnover rate of child welfare social workers is above 30%, with some counties grappling with half or more of their staff leaving every year. One consequence of North Carolina's child welfare workforce crisis is the increase in each worker's caseload. While the state has set a standard caseload for CPS Assessments of 1 worker per 10 families, more than 70% of counties have experienced at least one month of CPS caseloads that exceeded this standard over the past two years. Because caseloads do not encompass the entire scope of work included in child welfare workers' duties, NCDSS issued a Request for Proposals to conduct a comprehensive workload study for better analysis of how workload contributes to turnover and impacts outcomes for children and families. With the workload study data, NCDHHS-DSS will be able to better identify and address disparities in workload among counties and support consistency in practice statewide.

The goals of the study are:

- To understand the routine activities conducted by child welfare staff within each program and at various levels of each program to fulfill their duties.
- To understand the time needed to complete all mandated and/or generally recommended practice activities.
- To estimate the time required to engage in these mandated practices and, to the extent practicable, to include consideration of state-of-the-art practice that is reflected in national standards and developing initiatives in the field.

Each group of staff has specific duties and functions guided by policy and procedures. Additionally, each group's fulfillment of the assigned duties and functions is influenced by numerous case-specific factors. A few examples include the number of children in a particular family; the geographical distances between case participants; and the complexity of the child's needs.

After extensive review of proposals, a reputable firm was selected, with a projected date of completion in October 2023. NCDHHS-DSS contracted with Public Consulting Group, LLC (PCG) to conduct a study of caseloads,

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

MAILING ADDRESS: 2401 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2401

www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6432 • FAX: 919-715-0168

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

supervisory ratios, and the workloads of identified staff, leaders, and administrators. This will include, but not limited to the following child welfare program areas:

- Intake
- CPS Assessment
- CPS In-home/Family Preservation
- Permanency Planning/Foster Care
- Adoption
- Foster Family Home Licensing
- Leaders at the state level

PCG has reviewed our policy manuals and created a draft list of case types and tasks that staff complete. The next phase of the process is to conduct focus groups with county staff. The purpose of the workload study focus groups is to identify and validate the range of activities that must be completed to manage a case successfully and in accordance with policy. During the focus groups, PCG will walk through the draft case types and tasks list and work with participants to confirm the activities completed on a day-to-day basis have been identified and that the descriptions listed are accurate. We ask that participants for the focus groups include new and seasoned caseworkers and supervisors from small, moderate, large, rural, and metropolitan counties. Also, administrative support staff whose responsibilities are specific to child welfare.

**NEEDED ACTION**

Directors need to identify 1 to 2 child welfare staff to participate in the session applicable to your agency’s region (referenced below). Each participant must register by clicking on the link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/jTBfeC8TLf>

Region	Date	Time	Location
1	March 28	2:00pm-5:00pm	Buncombe DSS 35 Woodfin St, Asheville NC
2	March 28	8:30am-11:30am	Caldwell DSS 2345 Morganton Blvd SW, Lenoir, NC 28645
3	March 27	8:30am-11:30am	Guilford DSS 1203 Maple Street, Greensboro, NC 27405
4	March 27	2:00pm-5:00pm	Richmond Community College (Cole Auditorium) 1042 West Hamlet Avenue, Hamlet, NC 28345
5	March 28	2:00pm-5:00pm	Wilson DSS 100 Gold St NE, Wilson, NC 27893
6	March 29	1:00pm-4:00pm	Duplin Cooperative Extension 165 Agriculture Dr., Kenansville, NC 28349
7	March 28	8:30am-11:30am	Bertie DSS 110 Jasper Bazemore Avenue, Windsor, NC 27983

If you have questions about the workforce study, please contact LaShonda S. Pickett, Workforce Coordinator at [lashonda.stanley-pickett@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:lashonda.stanley-pickett@dhhs.nc.gov) or 919-588-0170.

Sincerely,

*Peter L. West*

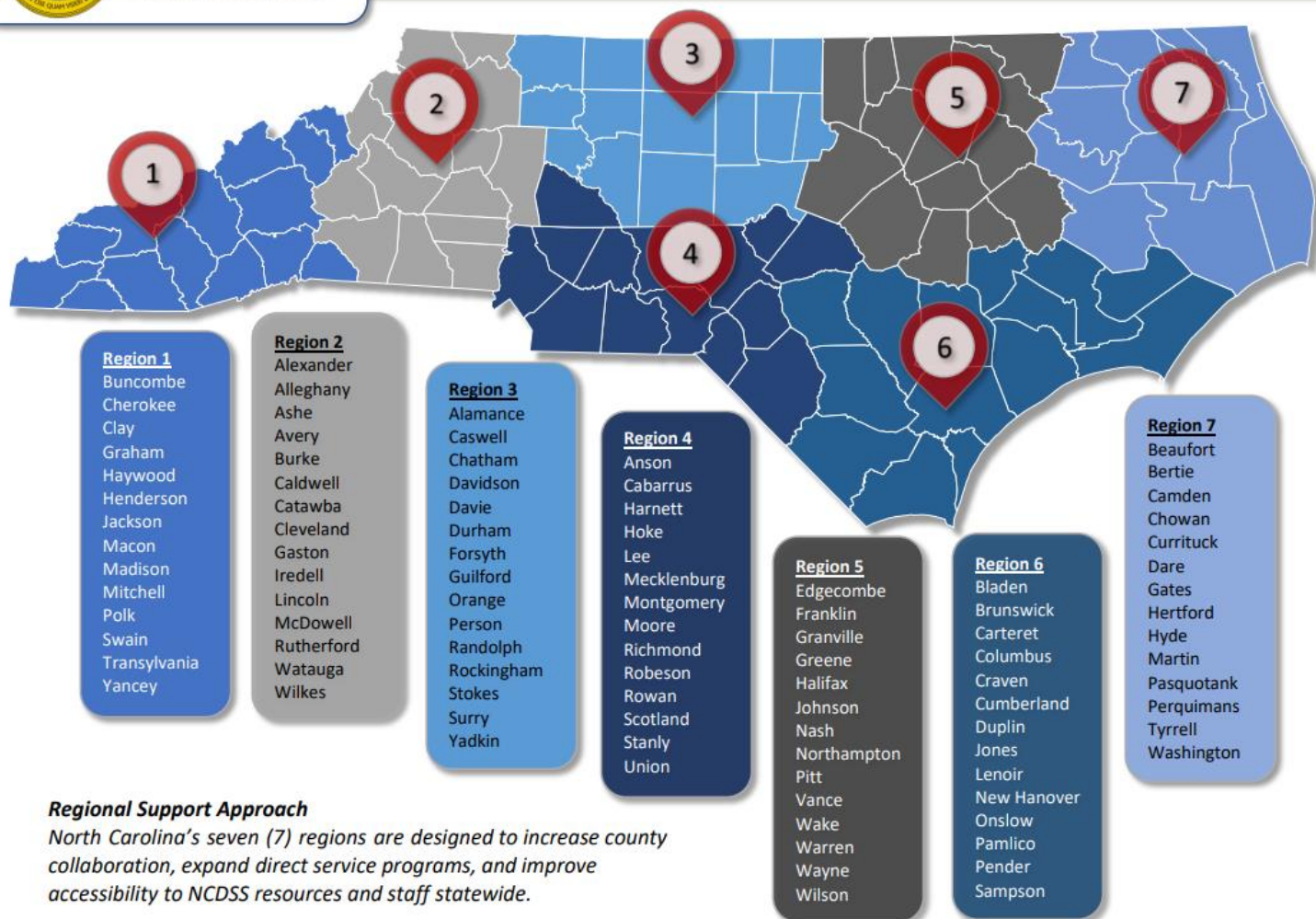
Peter L. West,  
Section Chief for County Operations  
Division of Social Services

Cc: Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary for Human Services  
 Lisa Tucker Cauley, Senior Director of Child, Family and Adult Services  
 Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice  
 Tammy Shook, Interim Deputy Director for County Operations  
 Carla McNeill, Section Chief for Permanency Planning  
 Kimaree Sanders, Interim Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing  
 Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety and Prevention Services

CWS - 17



## North Carolina Regional Support Map



**Regional Support Approach**  
 North Carolina's seven (7) regions are designed to increase county collaboration, expand direct service programs, and improve accessibility to NCDSS resources and staff statewide.