

**Montana Department of Justice  
Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman  
The First Knock at the Door: A Systemic Report**



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## Introduction

*The First Knock at the Door: A Systemic Report* is an analysis of child abuse allegations categorized by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) as Priority Two (P2). The goal of this report is to provide evidence-based information and guidance to improve Montana’s response to vulnerable children. The Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman (OCFO) extends our appreciation to DPHHS and CFSD leadership for their consultation and partnership.

In 2014, OCFO began responding to citizen requests to review and investigate specific CFSD actions or omissions in response to child abuse reports. Between 2014 and 2021, OCFO responded to 2,028 citizen requests and completed a total of 756 case reviews and investigations. During that period, OCFO collected a tremendous amount of data and flagged cases with similarities. As a result, OCFO and its partners have identified statewide trends in the child welfare system.



The term “system” is key to OCFO’s recommendations, which have the goal of providing systemic solutions. *The First Knock at the Door: A Systemic Report* will provide the following:

- An overview of basic steps taken when a report of suspected child abuse is made to Montana’s Child Abuse Hotline.
- An analysis of the handling of CFSD categorized P2 cases.
- Recommendations to DPHHS.

The Child and Family Services Policy Manual (CFSPM) requires a response to P2 reports described as follows:

“A priority two report requires that contact be made with the child(ren) who are alleged to have been abused and/or neglected or who are alleged to be at substantial risk of abuse and/or neglect by the Child Protection Specialist assigned to the report within a time not to exceed 72 hours from the date of the receipt of the report by Centralized Intake. Any time face to face contact with the child cannot be made within 72 hours; the exception to this policy must be approved by a CPS Supervisor and documented in the Family Functioning Assessment.” State of Montana, Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division. (2015).

Twenty cases designated P2 were analyzed for this report.

An OCFO statewide survey of CFSD employees about responding to P2 CPS reports yielded 150 responses, 104 of which were from employees responsible for P2 investigations. Of those 104 surveys:

- 80% of those surveyed indicated that there are barriers to compliance with P2 deadlines.
- 20% of field staff and supervisors identified “Unable to locate the child or family” as the most frequent problem in meeting the P2 deadline.
- 10% cited a large caseload as the barrier to achieving compliance.

In response, OCFO recommends the following four actions:

1. Improve CFSD access to current location information for children and families. Although access to several key databases is already in place, access to address or other location information may vary from county to county. Coordinated DPHHS interdepartmental support for CFSD should be standardized to obtain current locations of families. Given the high rate of difficulty locating children, OCFO recommends DPHHS convene a formal work group including CFSD, and the other divisions within DPHHS, to maximize resources for information sharing. Key external stakeholders within state departments such as the Office of Public Instruction are encouraged to participate as requested by DPHHS. The work group should participate in a minimum of three meetings and issue findings to the Director of DPHHS by January 1, 2024.
2. For P2 reports, CFSD should implement an electronic alert within Montana Family Safety Information System (MFSIS) to notify Regional Administrators, Child Protection Specialist Supervisor (CPSS), and Child Protection Specialist (CPS) 48 hours after the report is categorized a P2.
3. To improve information sharing, DPHHS, CFSD, and the County Attorney's Offices should strengthen county Child Protection Teams statewide.
4. When the 72-hour face-to-face requirement is not met, the case records for P2 investigations should clearly document the key decision points and detailed reasons why the CPS and CPSS did not meet the statutory deadline.

## Historical Overview

Since 2000, there have been six legislative audits and reports pertaining to CFSD. The pattern and repetition of recommendations in the six legislative reports illustrate the ongoing challenges for state intervention into individual family life. The consistent study of the child protection system sends a positive and clear message that children, specifically the most vulnerable, are a priority for Montana's state leadership. In response to a need for that consistency, the legislative Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee was formed in 1999.

***Children, specifically the most vulnerable, are a priority for Montana's state leadership.***

In November 2000, Susan B. Fox wrote and published a Legislative Services report entitled "Who is Minding the Children?" This report was a much-anticipated summary of Montana's state government programs that provided services for children ranging from dental care to disability needs. The most recent 2021 legislative report, *Performance Audit Kids in Care: Analysis of Population Trends and Management Processes in Montana's Foster*

*Care System* recognizes the importance of initial report screening and assigning a response priority as a strategy for addressing those challenges. It states that, "*The bulk of the work or caseload for CFSD is when referrals are deemed necessary to investigate based on CFSD's Centralized Intake screening protocol.*" (Maciver et al., 2021)

In 2013, the Montana Legislature directed the Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop and open the OCFO. As stated in 41-3-1208 through 41-3-1215, MCA, the purpose of OCFO is:

- (1) To protect the interests and rights of Montana's children and families; and
- (2) To strengthen child and family services by working in consultation with the department and with appropriate county attorneys in cases under review.

In addition to OCFO's responsibility to provide recommendations to CFSD, the 2021 Montana Legislature revised OCFO's statutory authority to include systemic investigations. Pursuant to 41-3-1215, MCA,

"The Office of Child and Family Ombudsman shall provide oversight of the child protective services provided by the department to identify and report on trends in the handling of the cases and make recommendations on ways to improve the child protective services system."

Internationally, ombudsman offices routinely conduct systemic investigations and produce public reports. Systemic investigations require the review of several cases to find a single specific trend or pattern that impacts multiple cases in the child welfare system. These reports provide data-based information for communities and public policy decisions. In 2021, OCFO worked with members of the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) and attended systemic investigation trainings hosted by ombudsman offices in Africa, Bermuda, and Canada. Based on the trainings and consultations with the USOA, OCFO adopted a protocol and considerations for systemic reviews and reports.

***Systemic investigations require the review of several cases to find a single specific trend or pattern.***

The protocol requires the following steps from OCFO as part of a systemic review:

- Identify the issue.
- Assess the issue.
- Develop a timeline for the investigation and report.

Further, the protocol offers considerations for reporting to be examined through questions such as:

- Is this an issue of public interest?
- Will there be value to the recommendations?
- Are there reasonable grounds?
- How many people will the report impact, and does that include vulnerable populations and decision makers?
- Is the issue within OCFO authority?
- Does OCFO have the resources to complete the review?



## The Issue

This systemic report focuses on whether CFSD’s response to 20 randomly selected P2 category cases met the 72-hour face-to-face contact requirement.

According to 41-3-102(7)(a), MCA, child abuse or neglect is defined as “Actual physical or psychological harm to a child, substantial risk of physical or psychological harm to a child, or abandonment.”

The types of maltreatment may include:

- **Physical abuse (PHA):** An intentional act, an intentional omission, or gross negligence resulting in substantial skin bruising, internal bleeding, substantial injury to skin, subdural hematoma, burns, bone fractures, extreme pain, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or function, or death.
- **Physical neglect (PHN):** A failure to provide basic necessities, including but not limited to appropriate and adequate nutrition, protective shelter from the elements, and appropriate clothing relating to weather conditions, or failure to provide cleanliness and general supervision, or both, or exposing or allowing the child to be exposed to an unreasonable physical or psychological risk to the child.
- **Psychological abuse or neglect (PSA):** Severe maltreatment through acts or omissions that are injurious to a child’s emotional, intellectual, or psychological capacity to function, including the commission of acts of violence against another person residing in the child’s home.
- **Sexual abuse (SAI):** Commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without consent, aggravated sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, sexual abuse, ritual abuse of a minor, or incest.” 41-3-102(20), (21), (22), (30)(a), MCA.

CFSD is the entity authorized to investigate alleged child abuse or neglect for the state.

When CFSD Centralized Intake (CI) receives a report of child abuse or neglect, CI must assess the information and determine the level of response. CFSD has several categories for reports. CFSPM categorizes reports as:

- **Priority One (P1):** A priority one report requires that contact be made with the child(ren) who are alleged to have been abused and/or neglected or who are alleged to be at substantial risk of abuse and/or neglect by the Child Protection Specialist (CPS) assigned to the report within a time not to exceed 24 hours from the date of the receipt of the report by Centralized Intake.
- **Priority Two (P2):** A priority two report requires that contact be made with the child(ren) who are alleged to have been abused and/or neglected or who are alleged to be at substantial risk of abuse and/or neglect by the CPS assigned to the report within a time not to exceed 72 hours from the



date of the receipt of the report by Centralized Intake.

- Priority Three (P3): A priority three report requires that contact be made with the child(ren) who are alleged to have been abused and/or neglected or who are alleged to be at substantial risk of abuse and/or neglect by the CPS assigned to the report within a time not to exceed 10 days from the date of the receipt of the report by Centralized Intake.
- Priority Four (P4): A priority four report requires that the report be fully investigated and assessed, and a written report documenting the determination be completed within 60 days from the receipt of the report.

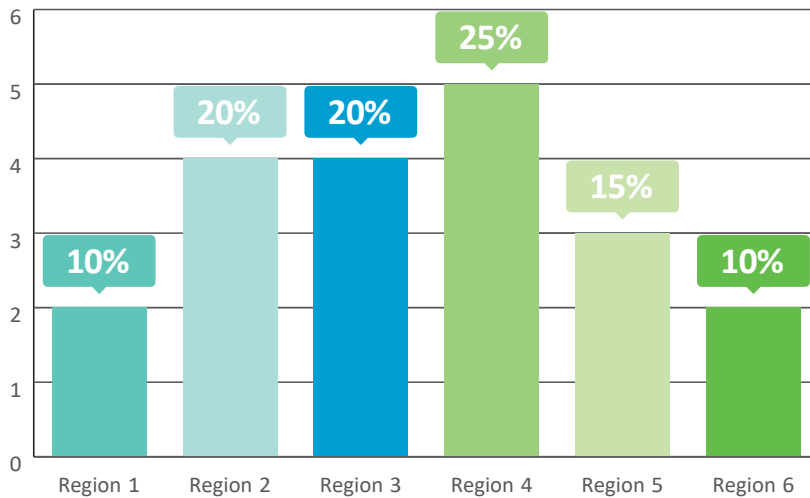
***The initial contact requirement for cases classified as P2 is vital to assessing the safety of the child and making a related case determination.***

The initial contact requirement for cases classified as P2 is vital to assessing the safety of the child and making a related case determination. The face-to-face contact allows for the CPS worker to determine if there is immediate or apparent danger of harm to the child.

# Systemic Investigation Methodology

## Identify the Cases:

### CFSD Regions



*Graph 1: Number of cases reviewed by CFSD Region*

OCFO selected a total of 20 cases from OCFO’s Request for Assistance (RFA) and the CFSD database known as the Montana Family Safety Information System (MFSIS). The sample was chosen by random and included 10 RFAs and 10 from MFSIS.

The RFA cases originated in the calendar years 2020 and 2021, and cases were collected from each of the six regions (as shown in the map in the Appendix).

For MFSIS cases, referrals to CFSD were sorted within the data system from reports opened after July 1, 2021 but closed by September 30, 2021.

## Case Characteristics:

Once the cases were selected, OCFO identified certain case characteristics:

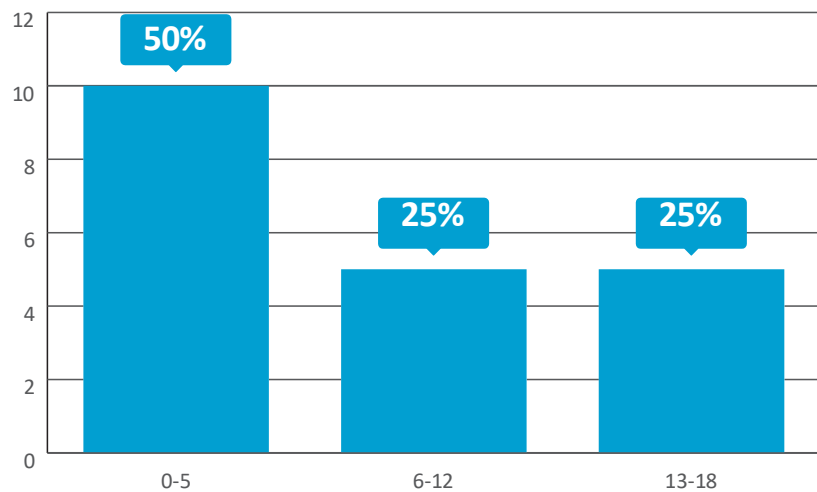
- Age of the identified child.
- Type of alleged maltreatment.

First, the cases were categorized by the age of the identified child. Age groups included 0–5, 6–12, and 13–18 years of age. The most represented age group was years 0–5 with a total of 10 children, as shown in Graph 2.

Second, OCFO reviewed the type of alleged maltreatment, which includes: physical abuse, physical neglect, psychological abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse.

Ninety percent of the cases reviewed for this report fall into the definition of physical neglect which is defined as “A failure to provide basic necessities, including but not limited to appropriate and adequate

### Children’s Age in 20 Cases



*Graph 2: Ages of children subject to P2 reports*

nutrition, protective shelter from the elements, and appropriate clothing relating to weather conditions, or failure to provide cleanliness and general supervision, or both, or exposing or allowing the child to be exposed to an unreasonable physical or psychological risk to the child” (41-3-102(21), MCA). This high number of physical neglect reports aligns with the annual CFSD data of report categories that come into CI.

In all twenty identified cases, OCFO reviewed whether CFSD’s response met the 72-hour face-to-face contact requirement. To determine the start of the 72-hour period, the Intake Assessment was pulled from the MFSIS. From that report, OCFO compared the date that the Centralized Intake Specialist (CIS) received the report and the report’s corresponding Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) to determine the first face-to-face contact between the CPS and the identified child.

In 55% or eleven cases, CPS met the P2 72-hour face-to-face requirement. However, in 45% or nine cases, the P2 deadline was not met (see Graph 3). Pursuant to CFSPM Policy 202-3, the FFA may include any document-

ed exceptions approved by the CPS Supervisor (State of Montana, Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division. (2015)). Upon further review of the nine cases that did not meet the statutory time frame, none had written supervisory documentation approving an exception to the P2 requirement.

### P2 Timeline Compliance for 20 cases

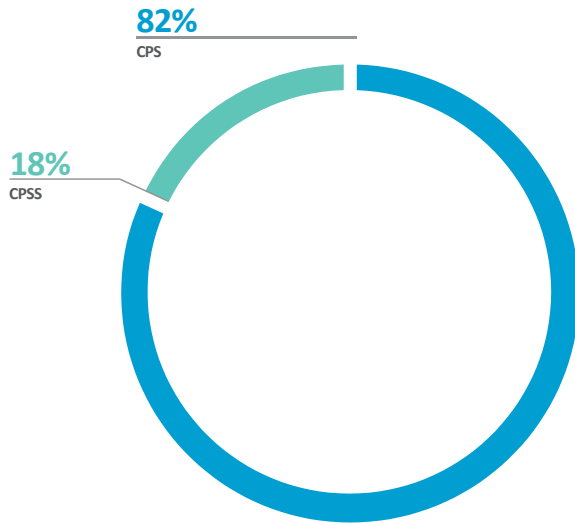


**Graph 3: Compliance rate for P2 timeframe deadline of 72 hours**

## CFSD Surveys of the Field Staff

To learn more about P2 compliance, OCFO, in collaboration with CFSD, dispersed a statewide survey to CPS and CPS Supervisors. The survey questions targeted P2 report response issues and were designed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in meeting the P2 72-hour face-to-face requirement. The survey was distributed electronically via Microsoft Forms and responses were anonymous. The survey questions included:

### CFSD Response Rate



- Workers’ role.
- Geographic location.
- If they have faced barriers in meeting the 72-hour timeframe.
- What those barriers were.
- If staffing with a supervisor was helpful in alleviating those barriers.

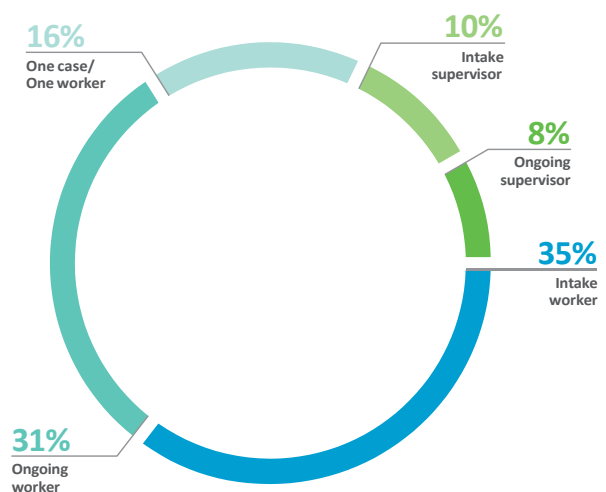
Distributed on November 17, 2021, the survey was open for one week. A total of 239 CFSD staff were invited to complete the survey, and OCFO received a total of 150 responses. Out of the 150 responses, 82% were from CPS and 18% from CPSS. Responses from field staff whose duties do not include responding to P2 reports are not included in the final data.

Aggregate responses to the survey are found below:

*Graph 4: Total number of survey responses from CPS and CPSS Management*

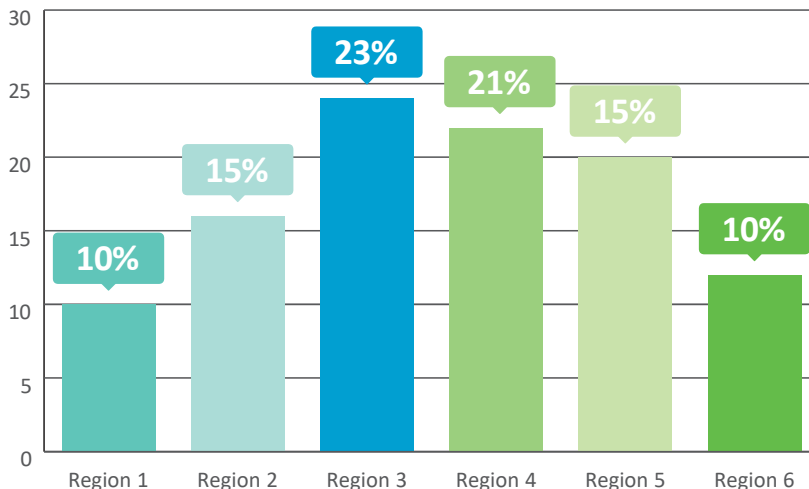
There are three types of CPS workers. **Intake workers** respond and investigate reports to CI; **ongoing workers** manage cases in which courts have designated CFSD as legally involved with the case; and in offices with the **one case/one worker** model have a single employee managing both intake and ongoing cases. Graph 5 shows survey responses by the type of CPS worker. Graph 6 illustrates the number of respondents from each region.

### Respondents by CFSD Job



*Graph 5: Total number of survey responses by specific job title*

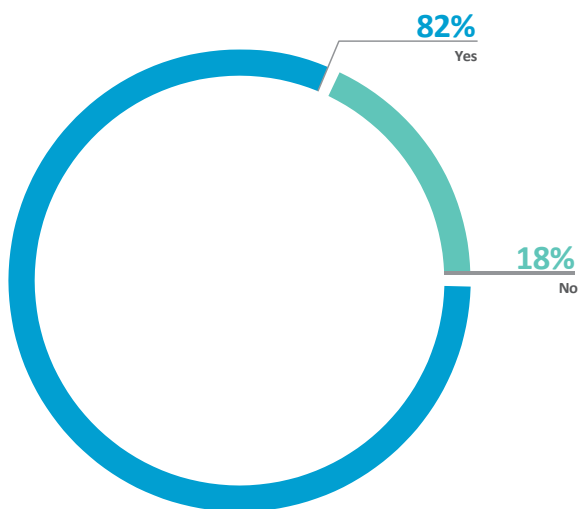
### CFSD Regions



**Graph 6: Survey responses by CFSD Region**

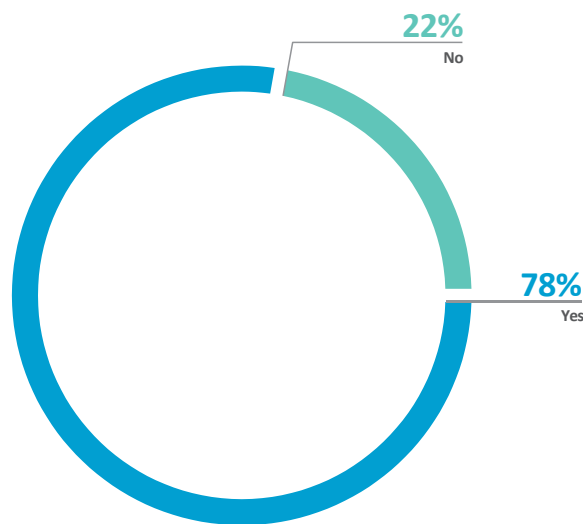
CPS workers and their supervisors have similar experiences with P2 investigations. The numerical average of responses to the survey question about barriers showed that 80% of both workers and supervisors identify barriers in attempt to comply with P2 requirements. The remaining 20% did not identify barriers, as shown in Graphs 7 and 8.

### CPS Experienced Barriers



**Graph 7: CPS survey response about barriers to the statutory timeline**

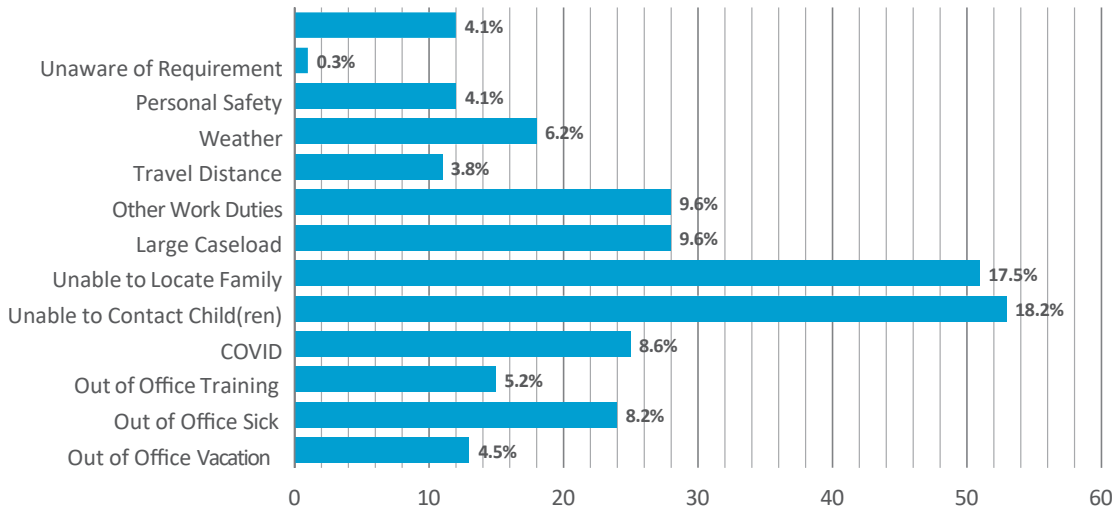
### CPSS Experienced Barriers



**Graph 8: CPSS survey response about barriers to the statutory timeline**

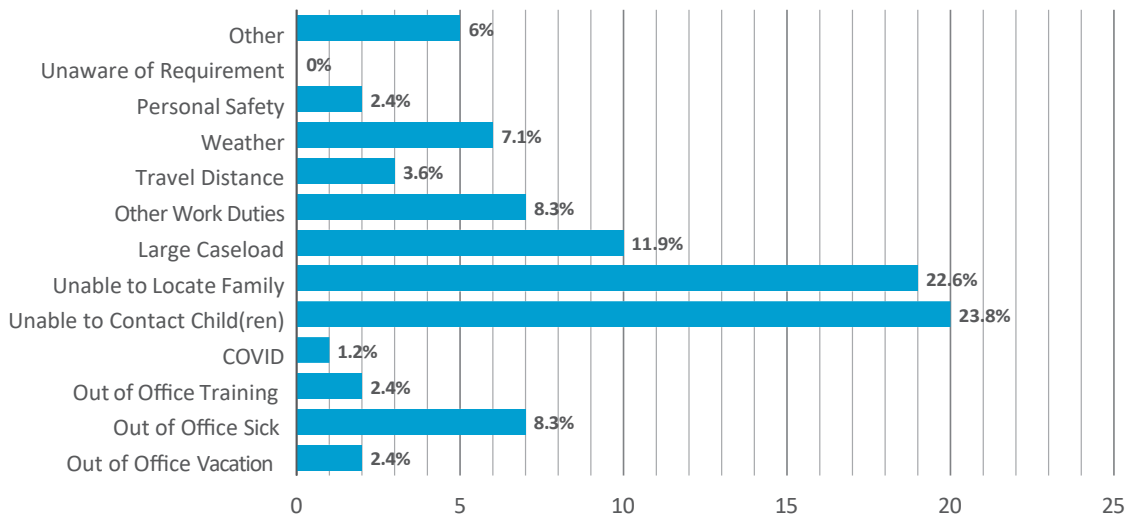
CPS workers were also asked to identify the barriers to compliance. For CPS workers, the most common barrier is that either the child or family cannot be located. The second most common barrier was managing a large caseload and other work-related responsibilities. For CPSS, the barrier encountered most by the field CPS workers was inability to locate children. See Graphs 9 and 10.

### CPS Identified Barriers to P2 Response



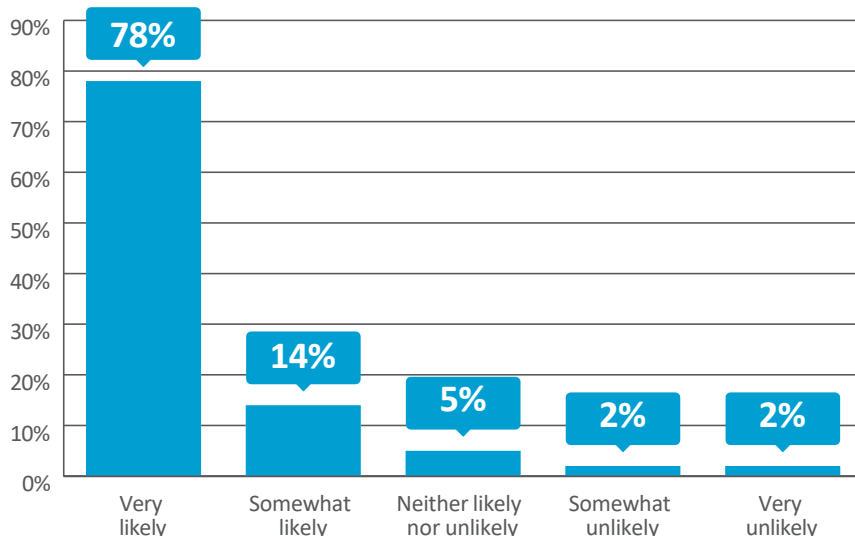
Graph 9: CPS survey response identify types of barriers to the statutory timeline

### CPSS Identified Barriers to P2 Response Time



Graph 10: CPSS survey response identify types of barriers to the statutory timeline

### CPS Responses to Staffing With CPSS



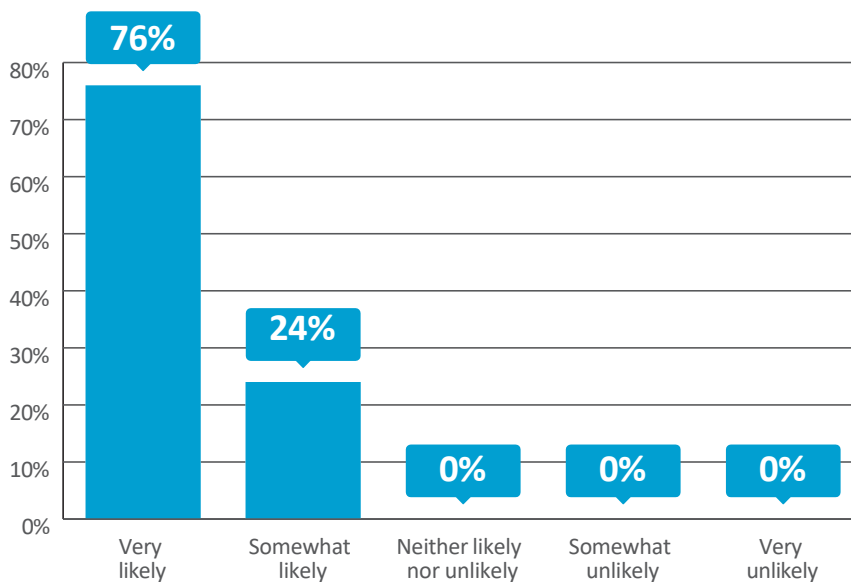
In addition, a total of 8% of CPS workers reported via survey that they were not likely to talk with a supervisor about challenges in a P2 investigation. But 92% are likely, or somewhat likely, to contact a supervisor. Both CPS and CPSS reported responses to the survey related to this communication issue, which among CFSD employees is known as “staffing.” See Graphs 11 and 12.

**Graph 11: CPS survey responses about seeking supervision on P2 case timelines**

Some of the barriers CPS workers encounter may not have been included in the survey. As such, OCFO created a ‘other’ category that allowed narrative responses including:

- *Report was assigned after the 72-hour time period had elapsed.*
- *Needed to interview the child outside of the home and there was no opportunity until school resumed.*
- *Not enough vehicles at the office to go out on the call.*
- *Backup staff from another county did not go out on reports.*
- *Communication barriers between staff and the family.*

### CPSS Responses to Staffing With CPS



**Graph 12: CPSS survey responses to providing supervision to CPS on P2 case timelines**



A sample of CPS survey answers to the question “does staffing alleviate the barriers?” included the following:

- *Staffing almost always helps with the barriers I face in the field.*
- *Yes, the CPSS is willing to help make initial contact and complete field work. She offers solutions by making initial contact and/or video calls.*
- *Yes, often times it does help. Typically, while staffing, my CPSS and I are able to come up with alternate avenues on how to locate the family. In situations of safety, we usually brainstorm ways to approach the family without raising the risk of harm towards ourselves or others.*
- *When I have been outside of timeframes on an investigation, I documented that information within my FFA, and the reasoning behind why, or why not is included. Any timeframe issues are always discussed with my direct supervisor.*
- *It may not solve the issue of not meeting the required timeline, but it does inform my supervisor that I have attempted to locate the children/family and I have a plan to again try to make contact.*
- *Appropriate staffing with a CPSS would significantly help the issue. Trying to maintain contact around meetings and court can be difficult especially if you are assigned multiple reports a day.*
- *Staffing does not necessarily alleviate the barriers. A lot of times when I do not meet the deadline to make first contact it is because the report was not assigned to me within the timeline. I receive some reports after the deadline has passed or on the day of the deadline. Other times I have so many reports because we are understaffed that I can only make contact with the alleged target child and no one else.*
- *Staffing does not always solve these issues. There are times where our office can be fully staffed but we still receive a large quantity of reports at once. If we make arrangements to attempt to finish contacts with two different reports in one day, but the first report turns out to have immediate danger, it possibly is something we are working on for the rest of the day and into the evening. Other challenges are, once a removal does occur, we have very limited time to get affidavits filed with the court; it can feel impossible at times to meet so many deadlines at once within the timeline.*
- *No, staffing these issues will usually result in statements like, “try harder” or “let me know how it works out.” I find these extremely unhelpful.*
- *I have brought up these barriers before. The response is always this is how the job is. I have been sent out on calls from one county to another during the middle of the night and in inclement weather after being sleep deprived from working a full day then spend all night for hours away from my home county. Instead of being paid overtime, I’ve had to flex a lot of my time during the week. This prevents me from working on other cases because overtime is not allowed. This has pushed some meetings back by a week, then I have to spend over an hour making phone calls to reschedule meetings and appointments.*



CPSS listed a further barrier in the “other” category:

- *P2s that are assigned close to the weekend likely will not meet the requirement.*

CPSS also offered answers to the question “does staffing alleviate the barriers for your staff?”:

- *We have a plan and a protocol we utilize to contact a family. If we are unable to do so, we have done active diligent efforts to locate the family.*
- *Time frames not being met typically has to do with inability to locate families and high number of reports with few intake CPS workers. Staffing helps as workers can help one another when headed to different schools or smaller surrounding communities.*
- *It does not always resolve the issue, but we are able to brainstorm and develop a plan if necessary.*
- *Staffing doesn't always alleviate the barriers. The biggest barrier in our region seems to be inaccurate contact information for children who are not attending school or daycares. We will staff different ways to attempt contact or locate families. Most times we do find families, but if we don't have solid contact information or family won't respond to the CPS, we struggle to meet the 72-hour timeline.*
- *I can't think of any other reasons why a worker wouldn't complete the initial contact within the allowed timeframe aside from being unable to locate them.*

***CFSD staff have identified that locating a child and/or the family is the most frequent barrier to meeting the statutory requirement.***

In summary, CFSD staff identified that locating a child and/or the family is the most frequent barrier to meeting the statutory P2 face-to-face requirement. Further, both CPS and CPSS reported similarities in how they view field work and how they address potential barriers through staffing. Additionally, CPS workers shared that, at times, they are assigned P2 cases after the 72-hour requirement has already elapsed.

## OCFO Recommendations

*The First Knock at the Door: A Systemic Report* as authorized by 41-3-121 MCA provides oversight to child protective services. Three required components of the oversight are first to identify a trend, then provide a detailed report and finally to make recommendations.

### ***The deadline was satisfied in eleven cases and was not met in nine cases.***

In the twenty P2 cases analyzed, the 72-hour statutory deadline found that the deadline was satisfied in eleven cases and was not met in nine cases. The data constitutes a 45% failure rate.

OCFO offers the following recommendations:

*Recommendation 1:* Improve CFSD access to current location information for children and families. Al-

though access to several key databases is already in place, access to address or other location information may vary from county to county. Coordinated DPHHS interdepartmental support for CFSD should be standardized to obtain current locations of families. Given the high rate of difficulty locating children, OCFO recommends DPHHS convene a formal work group including CFSD, and the other divisions within DPHHS, to maximize resources for information sharing. Key external stakeholders within state departments such as the Office of Public Instruction are encouraged to participate as requested by DPHHS. The work group should participate in a minimum of three meetings and issue findings to the Director of DPHHS by January 1, 2024.

*Rationale 1:* The first step to assessing child safety is for a CPS to have face-to-face contact with the child and communication with the parent or guardian. CFSD needs more officially mandated tools to obtain addresses. Public schools are a primary source of current address information, and in many communities, schools do cooperate with CFSD, but in other locations public schools do not.

*Recommendation 2:* For P2 reports, CFSD should implement an electronic alert within MFSIS to Regional Administrators (RA), CPSS, and CPS 48 hours after the report is categorized a P2.

*Rationale 2:* CPS may be assigned a P2 report after time has expired within the 72-hour window to locate the child. For example, reports may be assigned outside business hours, or an on-call CPS may initiate contact but then transition to the county office is not timely, or CPSS and CPS may be on vacation or out of the office and not see the P2 report immediately. A 48-hour electronic alert would provide notice when 24 hours remain available to locate the child and family. The alert would also notify the RA and CPSS to review the report and the status of locating the child and trigger the supervisory review.

*Recommendation 3:* DPHHS, CFSD, and the County Attorney's Offices strengthen Child Protection Teams (CPT). CPT, governed by 41-3-108, MCA, are an important local interagency information-sharing tool that may improve CFSD's ability to locate children. Members of the team may legally share information protected by 41-3-205, MCA, which requires maintaining confidentiality. High functioning CPTs meet frequently, include consistent interagency membership, maintain confidentiality, and have clearly identified case review protocols.

*Rationale 3:* According to 41-3-108, MCA, the purpose of a Child Protection Team is to "...assist in assessing the needs of, formulating and monitoring a treatment plan for, and coordinating services to the child and the child's family." A local Child Protection Team with interagency participation that meets consistently will increase valuable information sharing, including current address and location information about a child or family. Practices for such teams vary tremendously across the state, with some county and city jurisdictions meeting weekly and others not meeting at all. One child and family may engage with multiple community agencies simultaneously for various reasons or mandates, with each

agency collecting different detailed information. Across the state, agencies may have inconsistent information on any given child and family. Therefore, increasing the accuracy and frequency of interagency communication will enhance child safety.

*Recommendation 4:* The case records for P2 investigations, specifically the FFA completed by the CPS and reviewed by the CPSS, should clearly document the key decision points and detailed reasons why the CPS and CPSS did not meet the statutory 72-hour face to face requirement when the requirement is not met.

*Rationale 4:* When the nine cases that did not meet the 72-hour deadline were reviewed, case records did not provide specific factors for the ‘unable to locate’ status of the case. The record stated CPS had left a business card at the home address or attempted to visit the child at school. But the reports did not include additional information about other efforts nor describe additional barriers. A well-documented record with detailed case decision points would help identify solutions and increase compliance rate over time.

## **Current OCFO Staff**

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**CFSD Region Map**

**REGION VI**

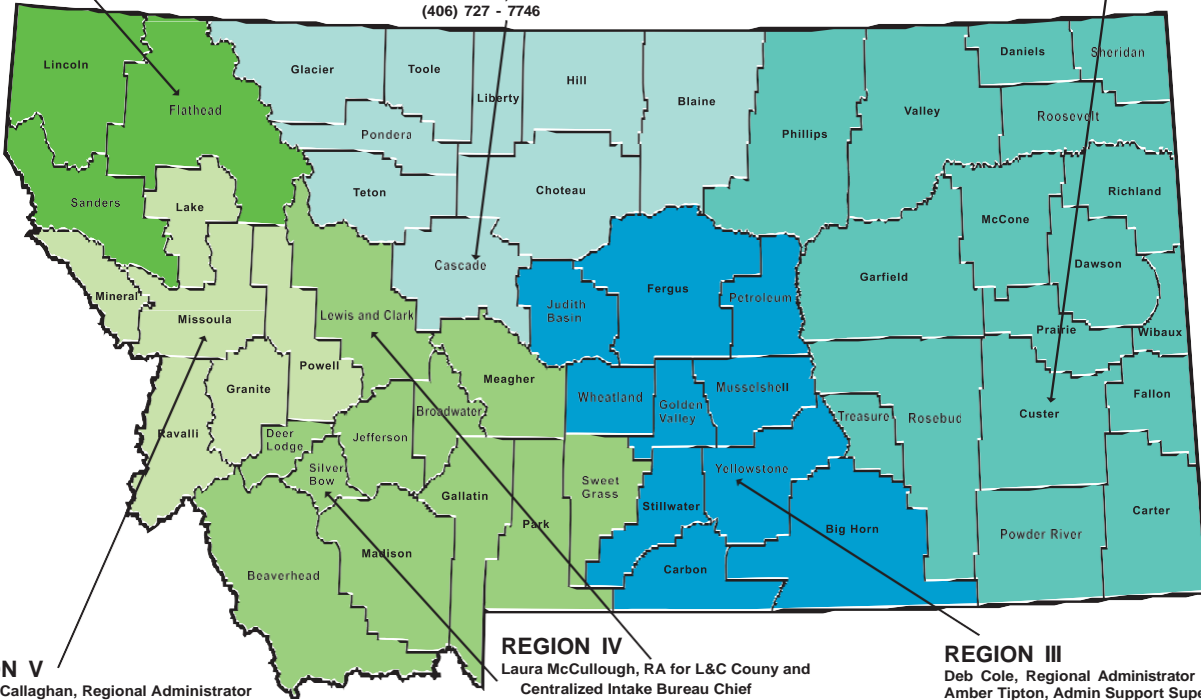
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## Glossary

<b>AI</b>	Additional Information: Additional Information to a case or report.
<b>CFSD</b>	Child and Family Services Division
<b>CFSPM</b>	Child and Family Services Policy Manual
<b>CI</b>	Centralized Intake: Where all calls to the Montana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline are received.
<b>CIS</b>	Centralized Intake Specialist: A person who answers the calls to the Montana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and assigns the level of the child protection report.
<b>CPS</b>	Child Protection Specialist: The caseworker for a child or family involved in the Child Protection System.
<b>CPSS</b>	Child Protection Specialist Supervisor: The supervisor of a Child Protection Specialist.
<b>CPT</b>	Child Protection Teams
<b>DOJ</b>	Montana Department of Justice
<b>DPHHS</b>	Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
<b>FFA</b>	Family Functioning Assessment: A form used by a Child Protection Specialist that assesses the dynamics of a family on which a report has been made.
<b>FND</b>	Founded: After the investigation, the Child Protection Specialist has determined that there is probable cause to believe that an act of child abuse or neglect occurred.
<b>IDA</b>	Immediate Danger Assessment: A form used by a Child Protection Specialist that assesses the immediate danger.
<b>MCA</b>	Montana Code Annotated: The compilation of the Montana State Constitution and all other state laws
<b>41-3-102, MCA</b>	Montana Code Annotated: Title 41. Chapter 3. Part 1.
<b>MFSIS</b>	Montana Family Safety Information System: A statewide database with access to reports and cases made to Child Protection Services.
<b>NI</b>	New Incidents: A new incident to an already existing case or report.
<b>OCFO</b>	Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman
<b>P1</b>	Priority One
<b>P2</b>	Priority Two
<b>P3</b>	Priority Three
<b>P4</b>	Priority Four

<b>PHA</b>	Physical abuse: An intentional act, an intentional omission, or gross negligence resulting in substantial skin bruising, internal bleeding, substantial injury to skin, subdural hematoma, burns, bone fractures, extreme pain, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or function, or death.
<b>PHN</b>	Physical neglect: A failure to provide basic necessities, including but not limited to appropriate and adequate nutrition, protective shelter from the elements, and appropriate clothing relating to weather conditions, or failure to provide cleanliness and general supervision, or both, or exposing or allowing the child to be exposed to an unreasonable physical or psychological risk to the child.
<b>PSA</b>	Psychological abuse or neglect: Severe maltreatment through acts or omissions that are injurious to a child’s emotional, intellectual, or psychological capacity to function, including the commission of acts of violence against another person residing in the child’s home.
<b>RA</b>	Regional Administrator
<b>RFA</b>	Request for Assistance: The form that OCFO requires to be submitted for an ombudsman to review a case.
<b>SAI</b>	Sexual Abuse by person responsible for the welfare of a child: Commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without consent, aggravated sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, sexual abuse, ritual abuse of a minor, or incest.” 41-3-102(20), (21), (22), (30)(a), MCA.
<b>SUB</b>	Substantiation or Substantiated: Following an investigation, the investigating worker has determined by a preponderance of the evidence that the reported act of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurred, and that the perpetrator of the abuse, neglect, or exploitation may pose a danger to children.
<b>TIA</b>	Temporary Investigative Authority
<b>TLC</b>	Temporary Legal Custody
<b>UNS</b>	Unsubstantiated: Following the investigation, the Child Protection Specialist was unable to determine by a preponderance of the evidence that the reported abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation occurred.
<b>USOA</b>	United States Ombudsman Association



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