



Lorain County Children Services

2023 Annual Report



About Us

Mission Statement

In partnership with the community, the staff, foster parents, and volunteers of Lorain County Children Services are committed to the safety and well-being of abused, neglected and dependent children and will provide the highest quality protection, permanence and prevention services to children and families.



Core Values

- We believe children do best in a family.
- We believe a child should be better off because of our involvement.
- We believe we should be involved with a child only for as long as needed.
- We value the child as our client.
- We value keeping siblings together.
- We value a diverse and inclusive workspace, and respect the diversity and equity needs of the families and children we serve.
- We value maximizing resources to achieve the best outcomes we can for our children timely.
- We value being a trauma informed agency.
- We value seeing our children to ensure safety.
- We value acting with urgency on all reports of abuse and neglect.
- We value high- expectations for our staff, foster families, and volunteers to accomplish the best outcomes for our children that we can.
- We value independent and critical thinking.
- We value that every child deserves to safely grow up in a family where they are valued, protected, and have the opportunity for life-long well-being.
- We value continuous improvement and accept change.
- We value our collaborative role within the community's safety net for children.

2023 LCCS Board Members

Jim Miller, Board Chair

Andrew Lipian, Board Vice Chair

Christina Doran, Board Secretary

Lee Armbruster

Rania Assily

Roberto Davila

Kenneth Glynn

Dan Gross

Martin Heberling

Tawana Jackson

Tamara Newton

Mallory Santiago



Dear Lorain County Residents,

As we reflect on 2023, it is with gratitude that we present the Lorain County Children Services (LCCS) Annual Report. We believe every child deserves a safe and nurturing family in which to thrive, and we take our responsibility to our community's vulnerable children and families seriously.

During 2023 LCCS received nearly 5,000 calls regarding children suspected of being abused or neglected. The majority came from Mandated Reporters, such as teachers, counselors, police officers, and hospital staff but they also came from neighbors, grandparents, and caring citizens. We are grateful to you, our community, who demonstrate your commitment to the safety and well-being of the children of Lorain County when you engage LCCS.

One 2023 highlight was receiving our national reaccreditation from the Council on Accreditation(COA). COA reviews all aspects of an agency, from administration and finance to program and policy through a Continuous Quality Improvement lens. This was an all hands-on deck review and the staff demonstrated excellence throughout the review process.

LCCS staff provided protective services to over 600 children and families in 2023 and found permanency for children through reunification, legal custody, and adoption. Our primary Core Value is "The Child is our Client." This guides our everyday decisions regarding safety, permanency, and well-being; assuring all decisions are made with the best interests of the child and family in mind.

An ongoing challenge facing our agency, and our community, is the increasing number of children that enter agency custody via court order. Some of this increase is due to a newly established Kinship Guardian Assistance Program (KGAP). KGAP provides relatives and kin additional financial support for raising their families' children, but it also requires the child to be in foster care first.

In addition to simply more children needing the supportive living environment of foster care, the cost to care for children, especially those needing more specialized placements has dramatically increased. This statewide challenge is really straining budgets of Ohio's counties, and Lorain County Children Services is not immune to this challenge.

We value the trust that you place in us to carry out our mission and we are committed to transparency and accountability in all our actions. Each day, we work hard to assess the needs of the children and families quickly and thoroughly, and value collaborating with our partners to provide the appropriate services for each family.

As we move forward, we are optimistic about the future. We look forward to continuing our work and building a community where every child is given the opportunity to flourish, and families are supported.

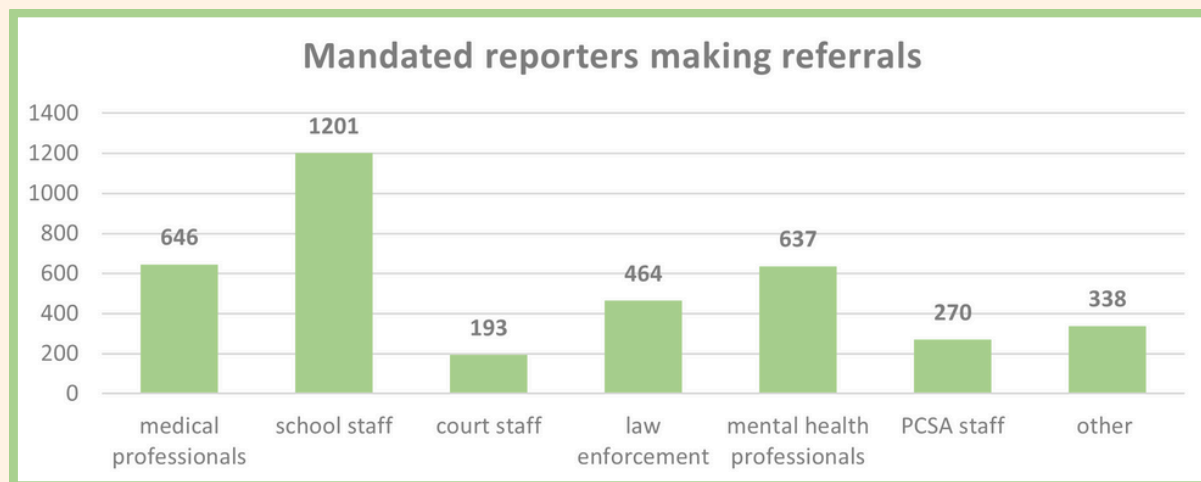
Thank you for your commitment, your compassion, and your partnership in creating a brighter future for all.

Sincerely,

Kristen Fox Berki
Executive Director



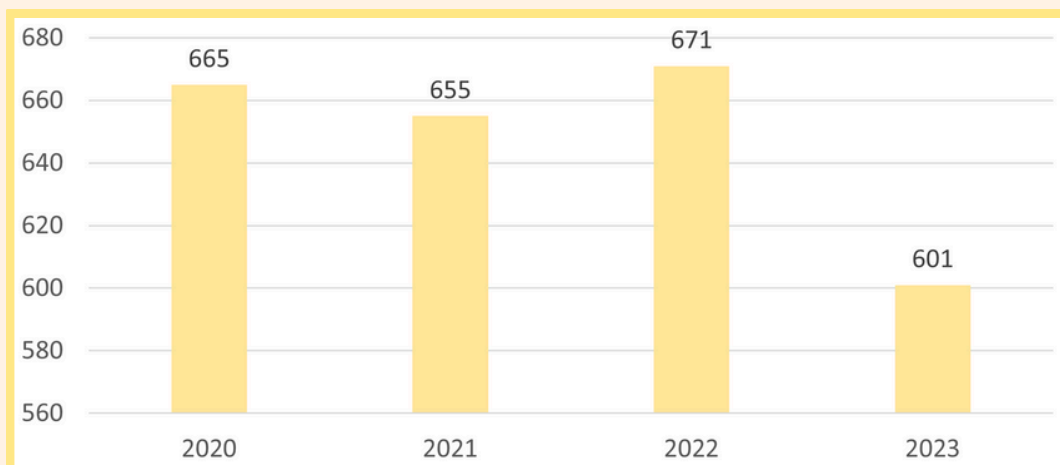
In 2023, Lorain County Children Services received 5,000 reports from people in the community concerned about a child. About 75% of those reports were made by a Mandated Reporter, someone who is, by law, required to report concerns about child abuse or neglect. Mandated reporters are typically people who work with children as part of their profession.



Of the 5,000 reports made to Lorain County Children Services, 1,560 were screened-in, meaning they met the legal definitions of possible abuse or neglect, allowing us to assign a caseworker to go see the child and assess whether the report made is accurate and the child and family are in need of services.

During the assessment phase which can last 45-60 days, caseworkers review the strengths and risk factors of the adults caring for children and decide with the family if longer term services will benefit the family. **In 2023, of all the cases that were assessed and receiving short term services, 538 families did not need any services from us; 508 families were referred to other agencies who provide services needed by the family and 269 families remained involved with LCCS for a longer period of time. Of the families that received longer term services, the average number of days a case remained open was 455 days.**

Families enter and exit agency services throughout the year. Over the entirety of 2023, LCCS worked with 1,383 children. On the last day of the year, (point in time count) December 31, 2023 we were involved with 601 total children.



Children in Care/Custody

On January 1, 2023, there were 157 children in foster care.

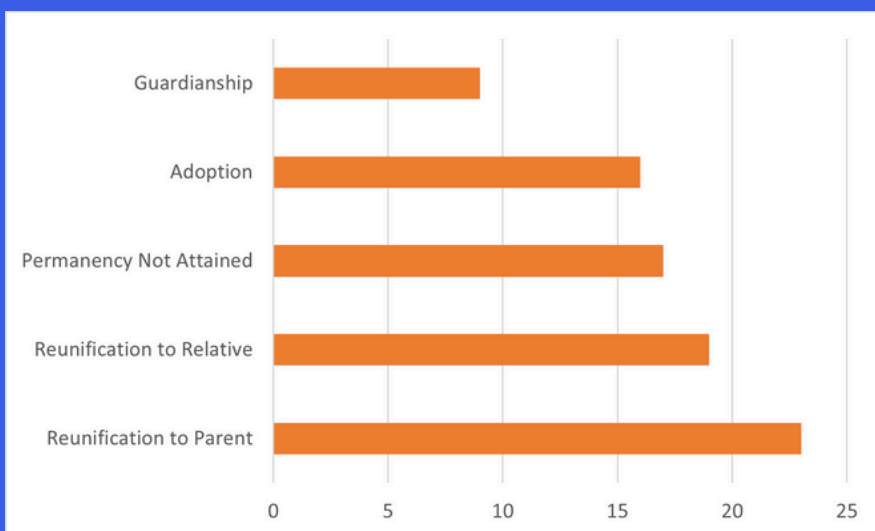
Over the course of 2023, the courts granted LCCS custody of 135 children and 84 children exited custody. On December 31, 2023, there were 208 children in foster care.

The prevailing reason for this increase is due to the Kinship Guardian Assistance Program KGAP. KGAP is financial assistance and Medicaid funded through federal and state dollars to licensed kinship care providers.

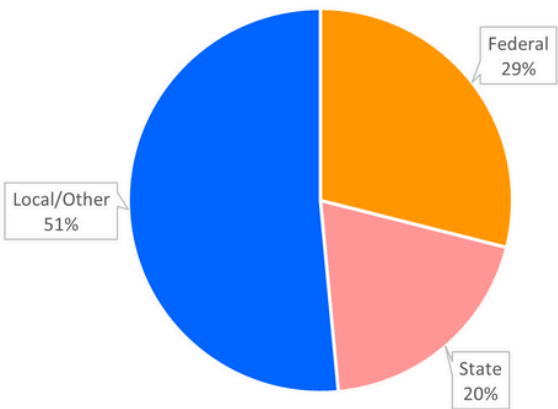
In 2020, 17 children in LCCS custody were placed with a relative. In 2023, 65 children were placed with relatives. This number is expected to climb. While this is a good program for the kin that care for the children in need, it does increase the number of children that are brought into LCCS custody.

In 2023, half of the children who exited foster care went home - to the home of their primary parent or to a relative. Other children were adopted or became legal guardians of a caring adult.

Typically, "Permanency Not Attained" means that the child exited foster care at 18 and is transitioning to adulthood.

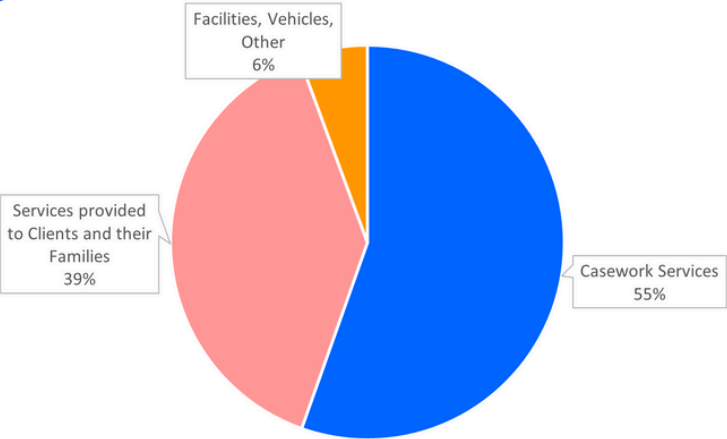


Finances



REVENUE

Children Services Levy and Other Local Revenue	\$12,300,457.01
Federal Reimbursements	\$6,913,666.64
State Reimbursements	\$4,674,696.42



EXPENSES

Casework Services	\$15,792,596.62
Services Provided to Clients and their Families	\$11,097,331.25
Facilities, Vehicles, Other	\$1,604,762.45