

# Delivering Results

annual report 2022-23



It is our privilege to present the 2022-2023 Annual Report on behalf of NWF Health Network. We are elated to share our very latest efforts working side-by-side with our community partners in faith, healthcare, education, and law enforcement to create stronger families and communities.

It is the alignment and focus of these partnerships that have strengthened those struggling with mental health and addiction, forged forever families, and made our students far more resilient and safer.

From the beginning, we bought in to the Florida Legislature's idea that communities working together can create better solutions locally than at the state level. This year alone, we strategically increased access to services (with an emphasis on rural communities), grew our local partnerships, and invested in our team and network. Throughout this report you will read how we accomplished these strategies by implementing tele-health and text-based treatment, outreach-care coordination, crisis intervention, NWF Health Connects, parallel services for our families, deeper engagement with school-law enforcement-caregiver-civic-faith partners, and putting more practitioners and peers to work.

From Pensacola to Perry, NWF Health Network demonstrates the benefits of prioritizing people before bureaucracy and **delivering results!**



Gerald Waters  
Board President



Mike Watkins  
CEO

Throughout the pages that follow, we will bring to life our shared successes in 2022-2023. Please join us as we celebrate a few of our results:

- **18 children adopted** during Christmas season across circuits 1, 2, and 14
- **More rural access** points to meet those we serve
- Circuit 1 **exceeded 50% of children in kinship care** placements
- **526 adoptions** - a statewide record
- Baker Acts **reduced by 15%**
- More than **10,000 children served** by mobile response teams
- More than **150 faith organizations** are coordinating services to families
- More than **15 outreach coordinators** are embedded in local sheriff's offices
- Administrative rate of **less than 3%**

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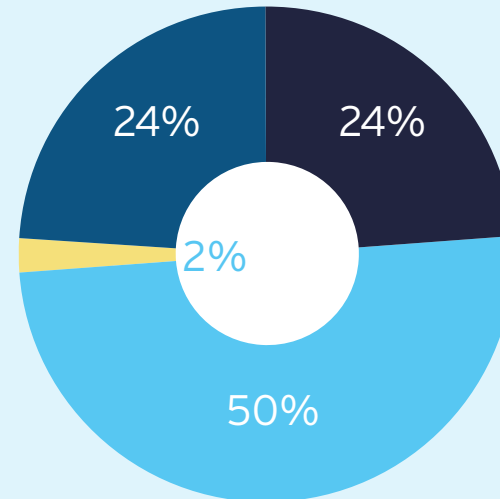
# Financial Update

2022-2023 was once again a record-breaking year for NWFHN. NWFHN was awarded the Circuit 1 Community Based Care Lead Agency contract effective November 1, 2022, with an anticipated annualized budgetary impact of approximately \$80 million and 156 new staff members. The available funding budgeted increased to the highest level to date of approximately \$230 million in 2022-2023 and is anticipated to increase to approximately \$270 million in 2023-2024.

NWF Health Network is once again excited to report that administrative service expenses remain at rates less than 3%. Management at NWFHN takes pride in the ability to maintain these administrative service expenses at such low levels, especially considering the continuous increase in administrative requests and programmatic service mandates with no additional administrative funding. NWFHN has been able to consistently maintain administrative expenses at these low levels for more than ten years while providing high-quality innovative services.

NWFHN continues to provide fiscal accountability through presentation of bi-monthly financial statements to its Board of Directors. Fiscal operating plans are reviewed by the finance committee and then forwarded to the full board for approval. An annual audit committee of the Board of Directors reviews the result of the Independent Auditors' Audit Report. James Moore & Co. Serves as the independent auditor for NWFHN and issued an unmodified opinion on the most recent audited financial statements.

Expenditures during the 2022-2023 fiscal year were incurred for the following purposes:



- 24% NWFHN **West** Community Based Care Lead Agency
- 24% NWFHN **East** Community Based Care Lead Agency
- 50% NWFHN Mental Health and Substance Abuse Managing Entity
- 2% Other Operational and Administrative

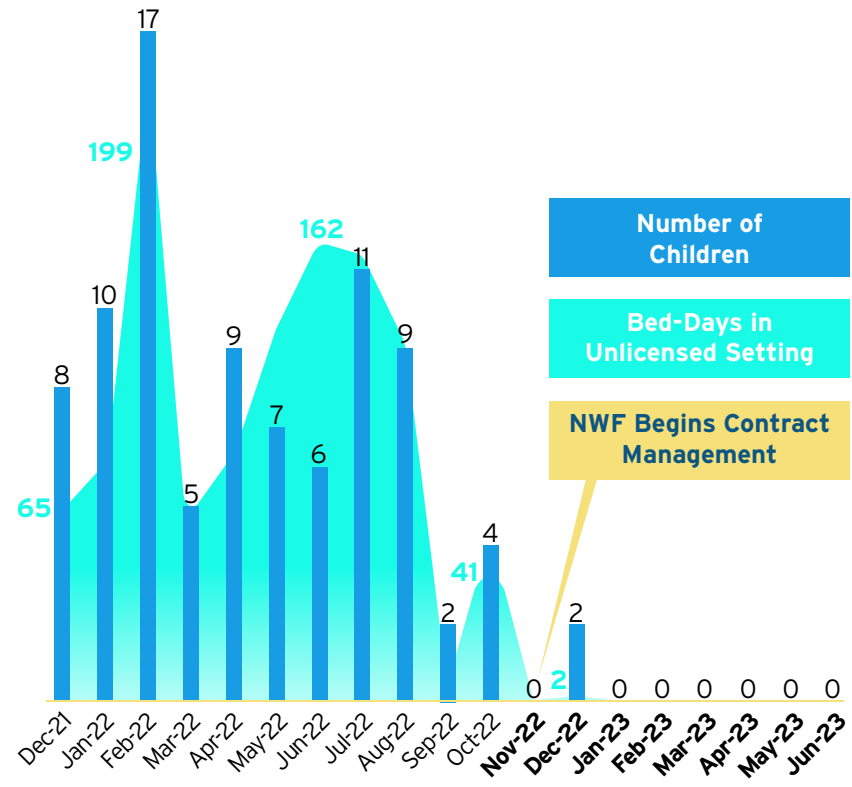
# Child Protection Lead Agency Transition

NWF Health Network (NWFHN), in partnership with LifeView Group and the Florida Department of Children and Families (Department), began transitioning the network management of child protection for judicial Circuit 1 in August 2022. On November 1, 2022, network responsibility for the management and oversight of contracts, operations, and finance was officially transferred to NWFHN for implementation.

With more than twenty (20) years of experience successfully serving as the Lead Agency for community-based care in Circuits 2 and 14, NWFHN's expertise in managing a child protection system coupled with our commitment to prioritize community-based governance and engagement in Circuit 1 were key in ensuring accountability and success in the overall transition.

The transition plan and timeframe to implementation established by NWFHN was not only aggressive, but was designed to preserve the workforce, licensed caregivers, and overall stability of the child protection system. Prior to implementation, NWFHN worked with LifeView Group to increase salaries to frontline case managers (funded, in large part, thanks to an appropriation by the Governor and Florida Legislature), began engaging with current licensed caregivers while recruiting and training potential licensed caregivers and analyzing caseloads to develop strategies for caseload reduction.

## Number of Children and Bed-Days Placed in an Unlicensed Setting

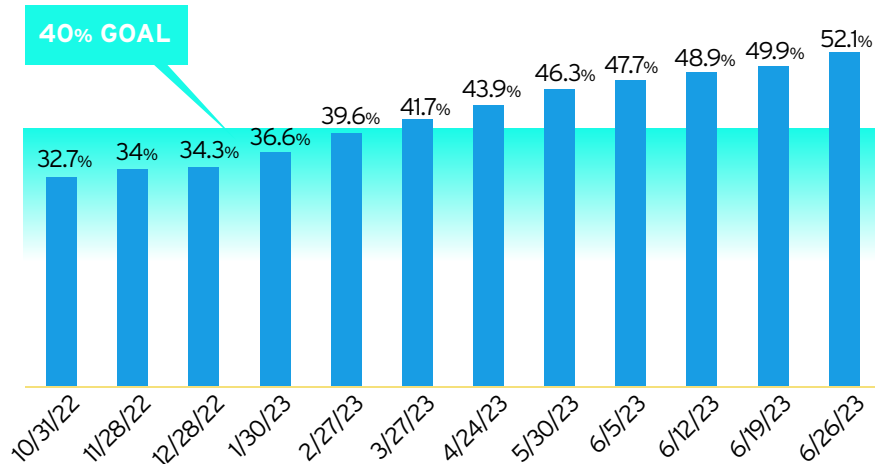


## PLACEMENT ARRAY AND STABILIZATION

Circuit 1 has historically struggled with locating licensed placements for children in out-of-home care.

The licensing of relatives and non-relatives as Level I - Kinship Caregivers was another focus area for NWFHN. Children and youth who are able to remain with caregivers who they already know and have a connection to lead to better outcomes. Circuit 1 had historically maintained a low level in licensing of Kinship Caregivers compared to other circuits in Florida and had not achieved the Department established goal of 40%. Circuit 1, under NWFHN oversight, is now one of the leaders in Florida for licensed Kinship Caregivers surpassing the 40% Department goal and is now over 50%!

% of Children Placed in Kinship Level 1 Care

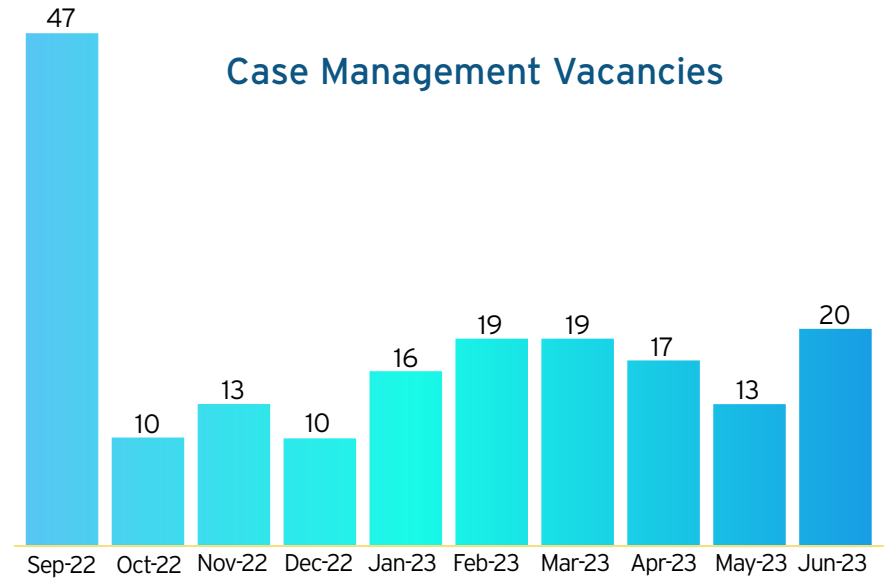


## CASE MANAGER VACANCIES AND CASELOADS

In addition to the increase in frontline case manager salaries NWFHN funded the case management contract at a 15:1 (children to case manager) ratio.

Prior to transition, the Circuit 1 average caseload per case manager 22.7 with case managers carrying caseloads in the excessive of fifty (50) children. At the end of FY 22/23 the average caseload per case manager carrying cases was 17.2.

Case Management Vacancies





# Hurricane Ian Family Support Line

Following Hurricane Ian in August of 2022, and at the request of Secretary Harris, NWF Health Network established the Hurricane Ian Peer Support Program. Volunteers who experienced Hurricane Michael in 2018 would provide real-time emotional support for Hurricane Ian survivors.

## **BELOW IS FEEDBACK FROM A VOLUNTEER WHO TOOK A CALL FROM A WOMAN IN PORT CHARLOTTE:**

*Ms. Monica L. called the peer support line again this morning and my personal cell was next in queue; little did I know this was not going to be another DSNAP call, but rather it would validate that our efforts are making a positive impact. Her reason for calling us back today was to ask that we locate her volunteer and simply pass along her "thank you."*

*She wanted to say thank you for answering the call from a random stranger and expressing empathy and sympathy for her situation, which in turn prevented her from committing suicide that day. Monica is a 78-year-old Jamaican woman who has lived on the same street for 29 years in Port Charlotte. She lives alone and has financial and health challenges. Hurricane Ian left her house with water damage and mold and after she came back from the shelter, she got COVID and then lost sight in her right eye. The day she called our peer support line was she had decided she was going to go into her garage, start her car and end her life. Her children are abroad, and she did not want to be a bother to them but could not find a reason to live in these circumstances alone any longer. Our volunteer answered her call, not knowing how much she was hurting, but provided encouragement and support as a previous survivor and although it was brief, it de-escalated Monica's suicidal thoughts.*



# 10 Years as Behavioral Health Managing Entity

## NWF Health Network was proud to recently celebrate its 10th anniversary as the Behavioral Health Managing Entity serving northwest Florida.

In 2008, the Florida Legislature began a transition to community-based substance abuse and mental health services by creating private Behavioral Health Managing Entities (BHME). NWF Health's services contract encompasses the 18 counties that make up Florida Judicial Circuits 1, 2, 14 and Madison and Taylor Counties from Circuit 3. As a BHME, NWF Health's primary role is to maintain an integrated network of private providers with the goal of ensuring optimal access to, and the provision of, quality services for all residents in its service area.

In the past decade, NWF Health has implemented and monitored innovative programs to address the mental health and substance abuse needs of the community at scale. NWF Health has worked closely with its partners to deliver best in class Care Coordination, Opioid treatment, three Mobile Response Teams, ten Community Action Teams, a Centralized Receiving Facility, Family Intensive Treatment, and early psychosis programs. Our approach has leveraged relationships with local hospitals, schools, and law enforcement agencies to help thousands of individuals and families recover and thrive.

"As we mark this milestone, we want to thank our staff, providers, partners, and clients for their trust and support," said CEO Mike Watkins. "We are overseeing the largest community mental health

and substance abuse expansion in Florida history. We look forward to improving the health and well-being of northwest Floridians for many years to come."

NWF Health has significantly expanded its provider network and funding over the last decade. It began by overseeing and contracting \$46 million annually in 2013. Today, that number has increased to nearly \$112 million in behavioral health infrastructure and services being provided in the community while maintaining an administrative cost less than 3%.



# GENTRACON23

[Generational Trauma Conference 2023]

GENTRACON23 was born following Hurricane Michael in response to the generational trauma faced by our communities.

**GENTRACON23 was amazing!** The global pandemic that happened only a couple of years after the devastation of Hurricane Michael further added to the already existing traumatic experiences of the citizens of the Panama City area and increased the importance of GENTRACON. One of the aims of this super-conference continues to be to assist child welfare workers to become more skillful and equipped to treat and relate to the children they serve. With all the fanfare imaginable, GENTRACON23 took place on April 4th- April 5th in Panama City, Florida at the beautiful Florida State University Panama City Campus. The atmosphere was electric, with the expectations of lives being changed by this amazing conference! There were nationally recognized presenters including Lonnetta Albright and Jeremy Wright of Forward Movement, Paris Goodyear-Brown, Pam Baston, Dr. Rick Marks of Relate Well.



# Faith-Based Initiative

In early 2023, NWF Health Network - thanks to the leadership of Governor and First Lady DeSantis - announced the creation of the position of Faith Liaison as part of a larger initiative to embrace and expand our faith-based relationships in the region we serve.

The goals of the Governor's faith-based initiative - and correspondingly, those of NWFHN - are to enlist, enable, empower, and expand the work of volunteer faith-based and community-based organizations and serve as a primary point of contact for faith-based institutions and community organizations in Florida and our region respectively.

As noted by CEO Mike Watkins: "We proudly stand with Governor and First Lady DeSantis to expand our efforts in this arena. The Florida panhandle has long relied on the strength, generosity, and compassion of persons of faith and this initiative compliments that sentiment."

## IMPACT

Since the launch of this initiative, the impact has been tangible and measurable. In conjunction with these faith-based initiatives, as well as other targeted programs, the number of foster families have increased. NWFHN has hired several individuals deeply connected to the faith community across our 18-county service area. These connections have led to recruitment of families wanting to and are now serving as foster parents. And make no mistake, our local faith leaders have helped make and continue to help make a very real difference in the lives of the families we serve.

## EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It cannot be overstated that the love, commitment, and dedication to service is already making a very real difference. To that end, we have:

- Created the position of Faith Liaison and appointed Marcia Mathis to the position.
- Connected with and signed up for communications with the Governor's Faith and Community Initiative Office.
- Attended a variety of faith-based meetings (DCF, No More Orphans [Tony Dungy], Safe Families, CarePortal, etc.).
- Met and worked with Foster Family Support (FFS) Director, FFS faith leads, community relations specialists, Independent Living (IL) regarding their efforts, needs, and faith-based connections.
- Promoted new initiative to use Behavioral Health Managing Entity funds to add additional services that are for the children and families we serve. Met with faith-based organizations to let them know about the new initiatives.
- Updated list of faith organizations and identified faith organizations who are contract providers (3), formal partners (5), and informal partners (123).
- Created brochure insert and faith-specific content for website.

# Family Crisis Care Coordination

Lakeview Center's Family Crisis Care Coordination (FCCC) Team was created to provide a 90-day care coordination effort for families in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Our target population is children who have had 2 or more Baker Acts if over 10 years old and 1 Baker Act if under 10 and have a high probability of being admitted into residential treatment, a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) program, or at risk of being sheltered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). When fully staffed, FCCC has a Child/Adolescent Therapist, Family Therapist, Youth Care Coordinator, and 2 peer specialists.

We formally began opening cases in January 2023. The team has since connected many youths to FCCC from referral sources as diverse as DCF, DJJ, Lutheran Services, and Baptist Care. Linkages have been made to multiple resources and treatment services, such as residential treatment, child psychiatry, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Northwest Florida, Center for Autism and Disabilities, and Lakeview's TRACE and CAT Teams. The team focuses on safety planning to help parents manage and even prevent crisis situations, including linkage to the Mobile Response Team (MRT).

Our greatest success so far has been providing hope to families where there has been either none or very little. For example, the father of a 15-year-old recently told our staff that he "feels things are finally going in the right direction," in their search for care for their child. Our peer specialist noted that the support FCCC has been able to give the family in navigating the system of care has been invaluable, especially given the strain their son's needs place on the family.

FCCC was also able to help with the successful reunification of a 17-year-old young man who had spent several years in dependency and DJJ. He is now back home with his parents and brother and doing fantastic! FCCC has coordinated food assistance to the family and even linkage to a basketball goal for the client. He is doing so well that he no longer requires psychiatric services.

Family Crisis Care  
Coordination remains  
committed to providing  
care coordination to our  
clients and their families  
to help them throughout  
life's journey!



# NWF Health Connects

Connects, our free-to-use community service platform, is becoming an indispensable resource for the 16 counties in circuits 1, 2, and 14, as well as Madison and Taylor counties. Built on the robust FindHelp referral system, Connects now boasts over 12,000 local programs across various essential services like food, housing, goods, transit, healthcare, money, education, work, and legal services. This year alone, we've added nearly 3,800 new programs, significantly expanding our reach and impact.

Our user-friendly platform serves a diverse audience, including clients, providers, and NWF network partners. With features like zip code-based service search and referral tracking, Connects prioritizes efficiency and user experience. Notably, our "preferred" partners are highlighted in search results, making it easier for users to find trusted services. The platform also allows professionals to manage client accounts, save records, and monitor follow-ups, adding another layer of efficiency.

2023 is a milestone year for Connects. Over 110 NWF employees have actively engaged with the platform, and user engagement has surged, surpassing last year's metrics. We've seen 4,793 identified users and 7,890 service searches, with the most frequent searches focusing on essential needs like food pantries, housing and utility assistance, as well as temporary shelters. This uptick in engagement underscores Connects' growing importance as a community resource.



# Florida Making Incredible Strides in Mental Health

**MRTs are rapid response teams of trained mental health professionals who provide emergency behavioral health assessments and connect those in crisis with alternatives to inpatient psychiatric treatment when appropriate. These teams are operated by community mental health centers, were designed by law to be a first response alternative, and to be on-site quickly within 60 minutes.**

The objective of MRTs is not just to provide immediate support to a person in need, but to also engage the family in their home community to eliminate risk to the individual and to others with wraparound services.

And to be clear, the MRTs don't just arrive, treat, and leave. They begin the process, where appropriate, of immediately addressing the problem and connecting the family to ongoing treatment services.

## **Has it worked? Yes! Fantastically so!**

In the Northwest region served by NWF Health - the 18 counties from Escambia to our west to Madison and Taylor to our east - we have seen a net reduction of about 15% in Baker Acts (even while our population increased nearly 5%). Perhaps most impressively, in our region, more than 10,000 children have been seen by MRTs and about 80% (yes, 4 in 5!) did not result in inpatient treatment - a level of care never before available to our children.

## **Why is this critical?**

When someone is in a crisis mental health state and needs to be involuntarily put into an inpatient setting, that alone can be traumatic. While that is sometimes a necessary part of the treatment protocol, it is good to know those charged with protecting lives and providing treatment have another tool in their tool chest and it appears to be having the desired effect. Our schools, school resource officers, and law enforcement agencies are working together to identify students in need, utilize MRTs to avoid Baker Acts altogether, and improve awareness of students needs post-crisis. In a complex world of managing mental health and keeping our children safe, there are many aspects underway worth discussing, but it is important to note the largest expansion of student mental health care with specific strategies that are clearly working. Florida lawmakers got this one right and with continued support from Governor and First Lady DeSantis, coupled with their first-in-the-nation childhood resiliency initiatives - it is undeniable that we are on the right track.



# Sheriff's Office Outreach Coordinator Program

In January 2023 NWF Health Network began partnering with the rural sheriffs in our network area to scale the pilot Outreach Coordinator Program that began at Franklin County Sheriff's Office. NWF Health Network funds a position in Gadsden, Jefferson, Liberty, Taylor, Wakulla, Calhoun, Holmes, and Jackson Counties, and two positions in Franklin County. There are three positions in Bay County that were Care Coordination positions through the Disaster Relief Grant NWF Health Network obtained after Hurricane Michael. These Care Coordination positions were converted to the Outreach Coordinator Program for consistency across the Network. Sheriffs in Walton and Washington counties have committed their participation in the program as well, and are currently in the hiring process.

Outreach Coordinators in Franklin and Liberty Counties have been conducting CAAPE-5 assessments as persons enter the county jails. The CAAPE-5 assesses for mental health, substance use, and co-occurring disorders to assist with a "warm handoff" when the person is released from jail to the appropriate level of treatment. This assessment also provides

Sheriffs with an overview of who is coming into the jail and where best to allocate resources. Based on the information from the CAAPE-5 assessments in Franklin County, NWF Health Network was able to secure resources to provide substance use treatment to persons incarcerated in the Franklin County Jail, which traditionally has not been available at this level of incarceration. The success of the telehealth services provided to incarcerated people within the Franklin County Jail has opened the avenue to provide telehealth substance and mental health treatment in other jails across the NWF Health Network as well.

Outreach Coordinators in each county come from vastly different experiences and backgrounds, bringing unique perspectives to the Sheriffs' Offices as well as to one another. Outreach Coordinators support one another across the NWF Health Network providing resources, recommendations, and education to each other. Jackson County Sheriff's Office hired Stephanie Culbreath as a peer in the Outreach Coordinator position. NWF Health Network is providing guidance to assist her in becoming a Certified Recovery Peer Specialist

through the Florida Certification Board, she voluntarily sought certification to enhance the quality of services she provides. NWF Health Network is continuing efforts to increase the use of peer supports for reentry and fatherhood initiatives in our law enforcement partnerships.



# SMART

In July of 2021, NWF embarked on a journey to prevent and reduce the use of methamphetamines in many of our rural communities. Through our interactions with local sheriffs, we learned that this scourge had expanded into these small rural towns.

## SO, WE TOOK ACTION!

We hired a firm to conduct extensive research and reviewed what did and did not work in drug and substance abuse prevention programs launched throughout our nation. We then tailored that research to our target communities (Holmes, Washington, Calhoun, Liberty, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor Counties) by conducting a baseline poll and held several focus groups with inmates and former inmates who were incarcerated due to their meth addiction.

We are very pleased to report that our efforts have had a measurable impact across several variables and the data from our polling showed clear and measurable progress.

The poll results show that the awareness of methamphetamine use has increased among the respondents even despite that fact that personal knowledge of someone they know using methamphetamine had not changed at all.

For example, in each of the surveys, approximately 1 in 4 respondents reported either using or knowing someone who used methamphetamine in the last year. However, awareness of the impact

of methamphetamine use on communities as a whole has increased, with 81% of respondents now stating that methamphetamine use has a significant impact on their community – representing a statistically significant net growth of +7 points.

## The results also showed the following changes:

- A **16-point increase** that methamphetamine use is a larger problem than other addictions,
- A **12-point increase** that one use can “get someone addicted to the drug” – a key message in our outreach,
- A **10-point increase** in knowing who to contact, and
- A **9-point decrease** in the belief that people who use methamphetamine can lead a “normal” life.

If there was any doubt of the correlation regarding these effects as a result of the outreach efforts, one only need look at the awareness of having seen “advertisements on TV or on your computer about the methamphetamine problem in your community” and that awareness among those who “definitely” recall seeing the campaign’s communications more than doubled!

Overall, the study shows increased awareness of methamphetamine use’s impact, and the above findings can be directly tied to the efforts of this campaign.

# Hope Squad

It started with a vague, anonymous note on the wall of a school bathroom indicating the writer was in distress. This caught the eye of a teen who is trained through the Hope Squad. When she found the note, she got a group together to make encouraging signs and post them in all the school bathrooms to ensure they would find the original note writer. "Everyone has to 'go' again eventually."

This is the type of action Hope Squad members take to ensure that all students know there is someone there to help and bring hope. This is far from the only success of the Hope Squad. As such a valuable idea, the program is now in every public school within Okaloosa County, all secondary schools in Santa Rosa with elementary coming on next school year, in a few schools in Escambia with more coming on board, and has plans to expand to outlying counties and as far as the lifesaving group can spread their wings. The short-term plan is to incorporate Walton, Leon, and Bay counties as soon as possible. They also started the first ever active-duty military Hope Squad in the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base. In it's first year the program is already saving lives.

Led in the locally by Peggy Brockman, Hope Squad master trainer and executive director of United for a Good Cause, said, "The peer nominated group are responsible for the tremendous success. It's students saving peers lives."

Peggy trains volunteer teachers, who in turn facilitate peer nominations to secure members from multiple peer groups to ensure as many demographics are served. With the diversity in place, the youth



are making a massive impact. "I've served at risk youth for the majority of my 18 years as a professional educator. This is the best training I've ever taken since being introduced to trauma informed care," said a newly appointed trainer on the official Hope Squad website.

"We are ecstatic about partnering with this tremendous program and especially thankful to have Peggy leading from the front. She has a proven track record and is extremely motivated to keep the Hope Squad active and valid for our youth," said Tracie Moore, NWFHN program development specialist. "The more resources we can provide gives us the greatest hope for our children's future."



# Independent Living

The Independent Living (IL) Program has seen expansion throughout 2023 by continuing to improve services to youth and young adults. Throughout 2023, youth specialists have been building strong relationships with the youth in out-of-home care leading to an improvement in quality and timely completion of Success Plans. These meetings are critical for the youth as their team of supportive adults helps develop a plan to achieve their future goals and transition to adulthood. The youth services team has implemented a monthly life skills class schedule, which continues to see an increase in attendance from youth and young adults who show up to increase their skills in areas such as Housing 101, Budgeting Skills, and the Importance of Staying Active.

The Independent Living Program continues to offer numerous supports to young adults transitioning to self-sufficiency. Through annual outreach of those not engaged in an IL Program and quality Success Planning prior to turning 18, the number of those opting out of the program at age 18 is decreasing. The IL Program celebrated 14 young adult graduations in May 2023: 11 received their high school diploma or GED, three received a certificate from a vocational program, and one received a 2-year college degree.

The IL Program is in the process of implementing an application and training process for host homes, a home where young adults are provided shelter and taught life skills through a mentor type relationship with a host parent. Safe Families +1 has been building a mentor program for this population to increase their adult connections and this partnership will also offer training for host parents to learn about trauma and building relationships with young adults.



## Kalise

Kalise is an inspiration to all who know her. She has always been one who recognizes her strengths and weaknesses. She has no fear advocating for herself, being relentless until the change she wishes to see manifests. Prior to turning 18, she obtained her GED and, since entering the IL program, she has maintained two jobs and earned three technical certifications (business management, entrepreneurship and business specialist).

Kalise not only continues to work towards additional post-secondary education, but she has already started her own business. Kalise has utilized her business platform to give back by offering free services to youth in foster care.

She recently spoke before the youth of Florida's Youth Leadership Academy as alumni sharing the importance of being involved in their local councils and the importance of youth voice. This is only the beginning for Kalise. While she continues to develop her personal business, she continues to utilize her voice within her local council advocating for young adult/youth mentorship and improving the system for the "younger generation." Kalise has an infectious personality and her positive attitude will lead her to do great things.

Steps towards developing quality outcome measurements have occurred this year with the creation of the Office of Child Welfare's quality reviews and the NWFHN IL Scorecard. NWFHN scored 100% on the first OCW review that monitored quality of services provided to the IL Young Adults as well as compliance related standards. Some of the data compiled since the implementation of the Scorecard (January 2023 - June 2023):

- Total number of youth/young adults that attended in person Life Skills: **146**
- Total number of youth with all required critical documents: **19**
- Youth opting into an IL Program upon turning 18: **13**
- Average number of young adults with a permanent supportive connection: **73%**

**The Independent Living Program is looking forward to 2023-2024 and continuing to achieve their goals!**

# Christmas Adoptions

**During the 2022 Christmas season, 18 local children were adopted as part of NWF Health Network's sixth annual Christmas adoption ceremonies.**

On Friday, December 23rd, a ceremony for two children was held at the Leon County Courthouse. Judge Miller and the foster (now adoptive) parents spent time reminiscing on the journey that had brought the family to adoption day. The kind words of the father directed to our own Olivia Thomas, Foster Family Support Specialist, were ones that reminded everyone why the work we have chosen to do is so important and how it positively impacts the lives of those we serve.

Christmas Eve adoption ceremonies were held the next day in Escambia County for ten children. This was an extra special day not only because it was Christmas Eve but because this was the first Christmas adoption ceremony in Circuit 1. Judge Harris graciously volunteered his Saturday and holiday to finalize the adoptions. After the ceremony he let the NWF team know he would come in any day of the year for celebrations like these! The grandparents, foster parents, and relatives who had cared for the children, several since coming home from the hospital as newborns, were delighted to make things official at such a special time of year!

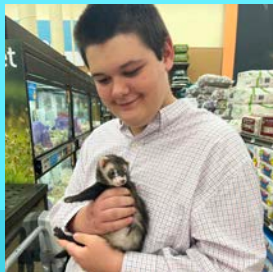
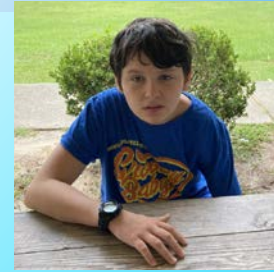
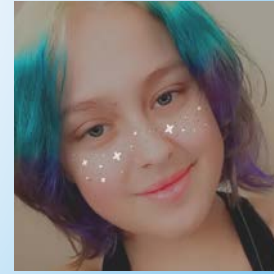
The final adoption ceremony was held at the NWF office in Bay County with six children. Judge Roberts was like a kid himself on Christmas morning finalizing adoptions in front of the beautiful NWF Christmas tree. He presented each family with a snowflake

ornament with a handwritten message from him to place on their Christmas tree. There wasn't a dry eye in the office as he explained the uniqueness of each snowflake and the correlation to the uniqueness of each child before us. It was a beautiful Christmas for all of these families!





# Heart Gallery



**NWF** Health Network

## Featured Staff



**Kathy  
Donofro**

Kathy Donofro has dedicated her life to the protection and permanency of children. For over four decades, she has worked in the social work field, tirelessly advocating for the children in our communities. Her journey in the field began with the Agency for Persons with Disability (APD), where her passion for helping those in need took root.

Later, Kathy transitioned to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), where she assumed various roles, including Adoption Case Manager, Home Finder, Adoption Supervisor, Adoption Specialist for Circuit 2 and 14, and eventually Adoption Regional Specialist. Her commitment to ensuring children find loving, permanent homes started in her various roles at DCF and has never wavered.

In 2006, Kathy joined NWF Health Network (NWFHN) as a Permanency and Adoption Specialist. Here, she continues her dedication to helping children find their forever families. Since Kathy joined NWFHN there has been a remarkable increase in adoption finalizations,

and Kathy's tireless efforts and relentless motivation in ensuring accountability within our provider network is why.

Outside of her professional life, Kathy is a woman of many passions. She enjoys being outdoors to connect with nature and loves traveling to other countries to experience different cultures. However, her greatest joy comes from spending quality time with her family, cherishing every moment with them.

Her advice to new social workers is simple but profound: "Have a dream and passion. You may not save the world, but if you are able to help or influence one child or young adult to reach their goals, you are a success. Our children are our future, and we need to provide them with whatever resources we have available."



# Family Spotlight

Chrissy Moor has been a licensed foster parent with NWF Health Network for the last 2 years. Chrissy has centered her career around helping and supporting children from being a teacher to running her own organization. Chrissy always felt she would foster and possibly adopt and wants anyone thinking about fostering to know that fostering a child is no different while at the same time being completely different than parenting biological children.

Chrissy says, "It's no different in that each child has their own needs and circumstances where you will have to love and meet them where they are at. But it is different in that it can feel like a lot of red tape can be in the way. You learn to communicate, advocate and be patient beyond anything you've experienced with your biological children, and that's an understatement. But it's worth it." We are so thankful for the Moor family!



# Circuit 1 Kinship Care

Circuit 1 Kinship Team has exceeded licensing 50% of children placed with relatives and non-relatives. This is the first time since the start of Level 1 licensing in Circuit 1 that the team has reached this goal. The dedicated team has shown determination and commitment in working with caregivers to license them because children are best served when they are with family or like-family.

The kinship team provides navigation and support to get caregivers during the licensure process and continued support after they are licensed. Level 1 licensing increases the caregiver's ability to provide care and stability for children who are placed with family or like-family. We are so proud of our Circuit 1 Kinship Team.





# Family Intensive Treatment (FIT)

The Family Intensive Treatment (FIT) model, the first of its kind in our nation, was developed by The Florida Department of Children and Families in 2016. The program is designed to keep families together and to heal and provide hope, despite socioeconomic and substance use issues in the home.

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, NWF Health Network served 348 families in FIT programs across our 18-county region. NWF Health has three FIT programs in the panhandle: DISC Village in Circuit 2; Lakeview in Circuit 1; and Life Management Center in Circuit 14. Each of these programs is managed by a staff of clinical and child welfare professionals, with the requisite education, skills, experience, and leadership all culminating together to provide the highest level of support for hurting families. It is with great pride that NWF Health can attest to the hard work and dedication of these teams in their tireless efforts to help heal and keep whole the fabric of our communities.

The program has demonstrated efficacy in reducing the number of reoffending cases of maltreatment. Treatment episodes typically last 9 to 12 months, so families have many opportunities to get the services they need to achieve reunification, when possible, and permanency, and many staff develop strong therapeutic relationships with those families. Of those families served, about 10% successfully completed in the last fiscal year. Many are still in the program as of this report.

Children of  
parents who  
received FIT  
team services  
were

15%

more likely to  
achieve timely  
permanency

3,025

Total number of  
families receiving  
FIT team services  
from 2016 - 2020

Helping  
mothers in  
recovery

74%

of parents  
receiving FIT  
services were  
mothers

# Community Engagement

## Florida Heroes

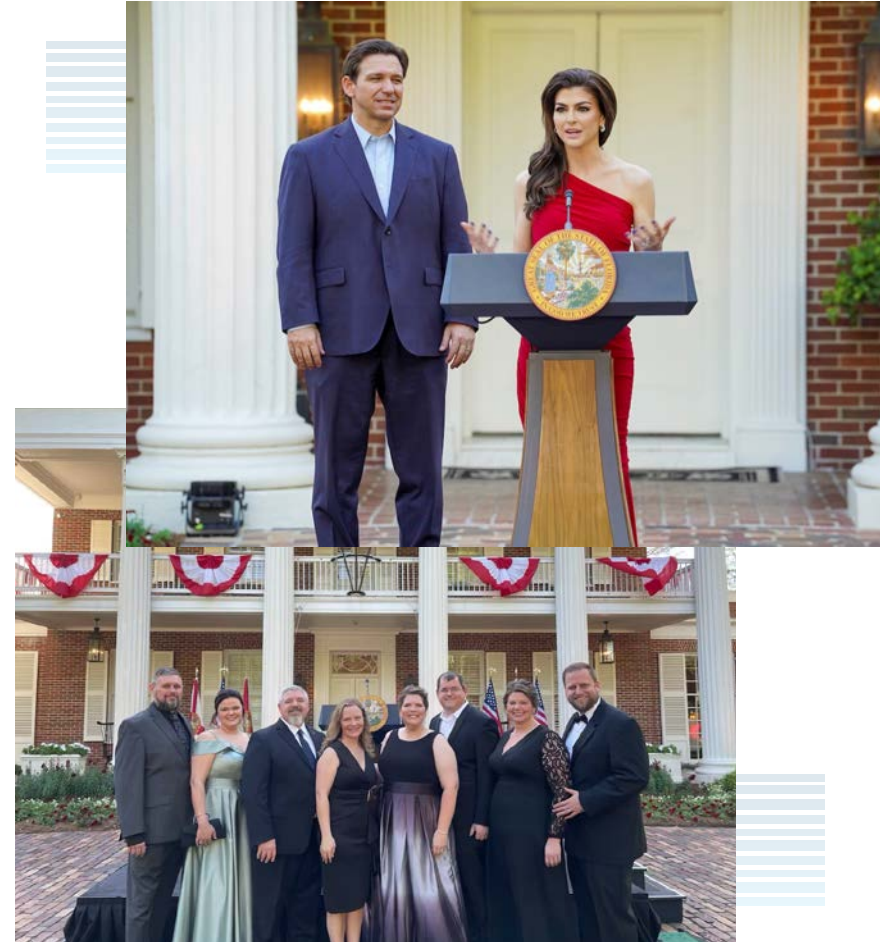
In March, Governor and First Lady DeSantis hosted the first annual Florida Heroes reception to honor 250 heroes from across the state. Among those honored was Molly Clore, the Director of Foster Family Support at NWF Health Network as well as Circuit 1 Foster Family Support Manager Jessie Howell and five foster families from across north Florida.

“As First Lady of Florida, I have had the privilege of hearing stories from across the state of the inspiring, selfless, and dedicated individuals that serve as strongholds in their communities,” said First Lady Casey DeSantis. “So many Floridians devote their lives to selflessly serving others, and deserve recognition. We were proud to welcome these exemplary individuals to the Mansion to highlight their inspiring stories that positively impact Florida’s communities every day.”

## Child Abuse Prevention Month

In celebration of Child Abuse Prevention Month, NWF Health Network, in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families and the Gulf Coast Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC), organized “Bonded by Blue.”

The primary objective of “Bonded by Blue” was to recognize and honor the tireless dedication of individuals and organizations committed to safeguarding children. The event created an engaging atmosphere that allowed attendees to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. It also served as a catalyst for networking among child welfare agencies, encouraging collaboration towards the shared goal of child protection.





# Staff Awards



Team of the Year: Accounting



MVP of the Year:  
Darci Lolley



Administrative MVP:  
Charles McDonald



Operations MVP:  
Lyn Masslieno



Team of the Year:  
Independent Living

# Community Sponsors

## INDIVIDUALS

Suzanne Adinolfi  
Bryce & Cheryl Ahrens  
Suneeta Ames  
Claudia Anderson  
Heather Askew  
Heather Askew  
Helen Aungst  
Danielle Austin  
Terri Austin  
Brittney Bailey  
Kandis Bainter  
Glen & Sheila Balabagno  
Bobby & Shara Bankston  
Seagrove Baptist  
Jodie Barrett  
Rachel Bassett  
George Batson  
Bon Beans  
Sarah Belser  
Erik Bergstrom  
Alison Blanchet  
Stephanie Boyette  
Lara Braddock  
Kathleen Branch  
Amanda Brane  
Tylin Brannon  
Olivia Breeze  
Corey & Madeline Brimer  
Katie Brock  
Janet Brogdon  
Stephanie Brooks

Kevin Bryant  
Lisa Burke  
Kelly Byrns-Davis  
Denise Cannan  
Sonya Chapman  
Beth Childree  
Michelle Clancy-  
Rutherford  
Brigitta Clark  
Hannah Clay  
Molly Clore  
Perla Coffee  
Michelle Collins  
Christa Colvin  
Brian Connors  
Jennifer Conoley  
Lori Conoly  
Terry Cowan  
Ashley Davis  
Amanda Dean  
Elizabeth Dickens  
Anne Diot  
Sarah Dittman  
Michelle Dollar  
Julie Drude  
Martha Dunning  
Jeanne Durden  
Lindsey Dye-Wallis  
Nina Dyer  
Jaryn Emhof  
Valerie Emhof  
Kelly Faircloth  
Deloney Family

Sumner Family  
Whiddon Family  
Katie Fanning  
Madonna Finney  
Matthew Fischer  
Jane Fleming  
Donna Dee Fogal  
Cheryl Fowler  
Madeline Fulton  
Stephanie Gauchat  
Miranda Gay  
Stacey Gay  
Cheryl Gerlecz  
Joseph Gerlecz  
Glenda Gordon  
Leslie Gortemoller  
Tiffany Grier  
Brandi Griffis  
Sybil Griffiss  
Laura Griffiths  
Robin Grix Steinle  
Brandy Haiman  
Emily Hall  
Frankie Hall  
Jamie Hall  
Jamie & Sabrina Hall  
Cindy Hamre  
Amy Hand  
Sherri Hardy  
Carolyn Harris  
Linda Hawkins-McInnis  
Aungst Helen  
Mary Helen  
Ciarra Henley  
Twila Henry  
Patti Hester  
Nikki Hill  
Dan & Alicia Hilyard

Orit Hines  
Tonya Hobby  
Shante Holmes  
Kelly Horan Vinson  
Tammy Horton  
Stephanie Houser  
Elaine Hwang  
Amanda Johnson  
Jena Johnson  
Karen Johnson  
Candice Jones  
Laura Jordan  
Carissa Jusino  
Amanda Justice  
Ashley Kelley  
Manda Kincaid  
Katrina Kochan  
Donna Krisko  
Jennifer Krumbein  
Bethany Lassiter  
Mylisa "Missy" Lee  
Michelle Lee Dell  
Kathy Lewis  
Timothy Lewis  
Victoria Linton  
DeAnna Lockamy  
Jeff Lollie  
Savanah Lollie  
Marie Lombardi-Mullin  
Kathy Madden  
Heather Maddox  
maggie Mafiol  
Sharon Mahan  
Maggie Maloney  
Jean Marsh  
Leslie Martin  
Val McInnis-Mason &  
Family

Marcia Mathis  
Shannon McArdle  
Billie McCosh  
Chelsea McGowin  
Cari McSpaddin  
Dorothy Meadows  
Patty Melvin  
Laurie Messer  
Cecile Michelloti  
Karyn Miles  
Cassie Mills  
Michelle Moran  
Christy Morcate  
Angel Mueller  
Dana Mullin  
Michael Murrar  
Ashley Murray  
Suzy Nadler  
Alyssa Nelson  
Stacey Newton Legg  
Tamala Nickerson  
Nikki Nicolas  
Laura Nofal  
Robert Norris  
Barb Novelly  
Daniel Nurse  
April Odom  
Lorie Odom  
Alicia Odom Brown  
Marisah Overway  
Jennifer Owen  
Stephanie Parker  
Matt & Crystal Parsons  
Donna & Andy Pate  
Victoria Patronis-Cuddy  
Laura Payne  
Jesse Peacock  
Renee Pelache

Tami Peters  
Yaacov & Teddy Petscher  
Amy Pfau  
Jeff Pic  
Deshni Pillay  
Annie Pogo  
Anita Pope  
Kay Povilaitis  
Katrina Prickett  
Susan Pruitt  
Amanda Purnell  
Party Putt  
Pamela Quimuyog  
Kellie Ralston  
Stephanie Ramer  
Kimberly Renspie  
Jill Richter  
Tricia Roark  
Maryann Roberts  
Melissa Robinson  
Raven Robinson  
Susan & Paul Robinson  
Miranda Rollins  
Michelle Rutherford  
John Sablan  
Sandy Sallinger  
Shelley Scarborough  
Mary Schaffer  
Karen Schebler  
Divida Schissler  
Glenna Schluck  
Oneda Scott  
Robin Seingle  
Debbie Self  
Naomi Sharp  
Jamie Sheehan  
Judy Shiipman  
Dee Shiray

Jenny Shiver  
 Alicia Shook  
 Heather Shrout  
 Allanah Shubrick  
 Jazminee Shumway  
 Amy Silas  
 Lindsey Simmons  
 Carita Sims  
 Christi Skiles  
 Ashley Smith  
 Bambi Smith  
 Eric Smith  
 Justin Smith  
 Mary Helen Smith  
 Denise Smith-Baril  
 Dyshenique Snell  
 Trethany Snider  
 Heather Snyder  
 Lisa Spear  
 Betsy Spice  
 Sarah Stevens  
 Melissa Strickland  
 Ruth Thibodaux  
 Leah Thomas  
 Dana Torbett  
 Ellie Tullis  
 Christi Tyner  
 Georgette  
 Vandersommen  
 Emi & Abby Wainwright  
 Lindsey Wallis  
 Katelyn Ward  
 Lindsey-Joy Watson  
 Amy Waymire  
 Jessica Webb  
 Kristy Webb  
 Elizabeth Weldy  
 Jennifer Werden

Debbi Whitaker  
 Jordan Whitley  
 Cynthia Wiggins  
 Ann Wohlford  
 Leslie Womble  
 Alana Woods  
 Karen Works  
 Rebeca Wurst  
 Kati Yates  
 Jason Ybarra

## BUSINESSES

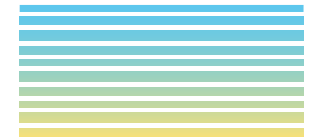
2 Birds Cafe  
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 Abide Coffee Co.  
 Adrienne Lynn  
 Photography  
 Alexis Simmons  
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 American Legion  
 Auxiliary  
 Aspen Smitha  
 Photography  
 Audrey Darke  
 Photography  
 Azhar Khan Photography  
 Back Home Bakery  
 Bellflower photography  
 Beth Johnson  
 Photography  
 Better Homes and  
 Gardens Real Estate  
 Cait Wanex Photography  
 Callaway Assembly of God  
 Cashmere Caligraphy  
 CDC Artistry

Chapel Hill Baptist Church  
 Community Foundation  
 for N. FL Peerson Fund  
 Conley Elementary  
 School  
 Courtney Wahl  
 Photography  
 Creamer's Tree Service  
 Curiouser and Curiouser  
 Photography  
 Cuttings Photography  
 Danielle Lynne Photo  
 Co. 2.0  
 DeeAnn B. Photography  
 Desiree Chapman  
 Photography  
 East Pass Coffee Co  
 Ebare Photography  
 Elaine Lipscomb  
 Photography  
 Emerald Coast Zoo  
 End of the Rainbow  
 Events  
 Eppes Photography  
 Erica Leigh Photography  
 Erin Batts Photography  
 Evangel Church  
 Extrabright Photography  
 Fancy Camps  
 FBCP-Leaff  
 First Baptist of Crestview  
 Fly By Coffee  
 FOMO Photography  
 Garretson Photography  
 Generations Church  
 GFWC Junior Women's  
 Club of Midtown  
 GFWC of Tallahassee

GFWC Women's Club  
 Go with the Flow  
 Photography  
 Golden Bell Photos  
 Grace Covenant Church  
 Gulf Breeze Zoo  
 Gulf Coast Womens Club  
 of Panama City  
 Haley Lynn photography  
 High Praise Church  
 High Praise Crestview  
 Holmes Creek Baptist  
 Church  
 Hopkins Eatery  
 Infinity Con  
 Inga Finch Photography  
 Jasmine Card  
 Photography  
 JD's Photography  
 Pensacola  
 Jennifer Powell  
 Photography  
 Johanna Photography  
 Joint Focus Photography  
 Jojo's Coffee & Goodness  
 Just Kidding  
 Photography  
 Kate Sullivan School  
 Kaydee Kelly  
 Photography  
 Kelsei Frazier  
 Photography  
 Kiwanis of Port St. Joe  
 KM Clark Photography  
 Kristin Marie  
 Photography  
 Lead Behavior Anal.  
 Panhandle Beh. Services

LifePoint Church  
 Lighthouse Church  
 Panama City  
 LMS Photography  
 Lowery Chiropractic  
 Lynn Haven Methodist  
 Church  
 Maddie with a camera  
 MAH Photography  
 Mandie Barber Studios  
 Mission BBQ  
 MJ's Place  
 North Bay Haven Charter  
 Academy  
 North Florida Acquatic  
 Adventures  
 NWFRC  
 Opal Photography  
 Panama City Parrot  
 Head Club  
 Premier Pools  
 Raegan Price  
 Photography  
 Ramblin' Mama  
 Photography  
 Richard's Phtotography  
 RJ's Alluring Photos  
 Royal American  
 SaltyNative Alligator  
 Point Fishing Charters  
 Sarah Gray Photography  
 Southern Dawn  
 Photography  
 St John's Council of  
 Catholic Women  
 Suneeta Ames  
 Photography  
 Tallahassee Bar Assoc. -

Young Lawyers  
 The Adoption Offices of  
 Madonna Finney  
 The Gulfarium  
 The Retreat at Silver  
 Springs  
 The Shores Resort & Spa,  
 Daytona Beach  
 The Valley Village  
 Timberlane Church of  
 Christ  
 TruDream Photography  
 Urban Air of Destin  
 V SOUSA PHOTO LLC  
 Valley Village  
 Vicki Young Photography  
 Vizuliz  
 Waffle House  
 Wakulla Springs Lodge

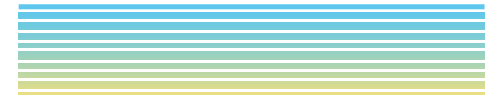


# Providers

Anchorage Children's Home  
Ability First  
Apalachee Center  
Baptist Hospital  
Bay County Sheriff's Office  
Bay County Schools  
Big Bend 2-1-1  
Bridgeway  
Boys Town  
Camelot Community Care  
Chemical Addictions Recovery  
Effort (CARE)  
CDAC Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.  
Chautauqua Healthcare Services (Lakeview)  
Children's Home Society  
Children In Crisis  
Capital City Youth Services (CCYS)  
DISC Village  
Early Learning Coalition of  
Northwest Florida

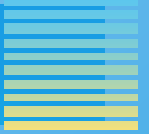
ECHO  
Embrace FL Kids  
Emerald Coast Child Advocacy Center  
Families Connect, Inc  
Florida Springs Wellness and  
Recovery Center  
Gulf County Children's Advocacy Center  
Habilitative Services  
Jackson County Sheriff's Office  
Judge Ben Gordon (JBG) Safe Connections  
Lakeview  
Leon County Public Defender's Office  
Leon County Sheriff's Office  
Life Management Center  
Lifeview-FamiliesFirst Network  
Lutheran Services of Florida  
Mental Health Association of Okaloosa &  
Walton Counties  
National Youth Advocate Program

Okaloosa County Board of County  
Commission  
One More Child-FBCH  
Ounce of Prevention  
Pancare  
Panhandle Behavioral Services  
Resilience Training and Education  
Institute (RETI)  
Turn About  
Twin Oaks Juvenile Development  
United Way of West Florida





# Service Centers



## **Bay Human Services Center**

910 Harrison Avenue  
Panama City, Florida 32401

## **Escambia Human Service Center**

1200 W. Avery Street, Building B  
Pensacola, FL 32501

## **Gadsden/Liberty Human Services Center**

305 W. Crawford Street  
Quincy, FL 32351

## **Holmes/Washington Human Services Center**

1352 South Boulevard  
Chipley, FL 32428

## **Jackson Human Services Center**

4120 Jireh Court  
Marianna, FL 32448

## **Leon Human Services Center**

1000 W. Tharpe Street, Suite 15  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

## **Wakulla Human Services Center**

69 High Drive  
Crawfordville, FL 32327

## **NWF Health Network Administrative Office**

525 N. Martin Luther King Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

# Delivering Results

annual report 2022-23

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NWFhealth.org



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Network