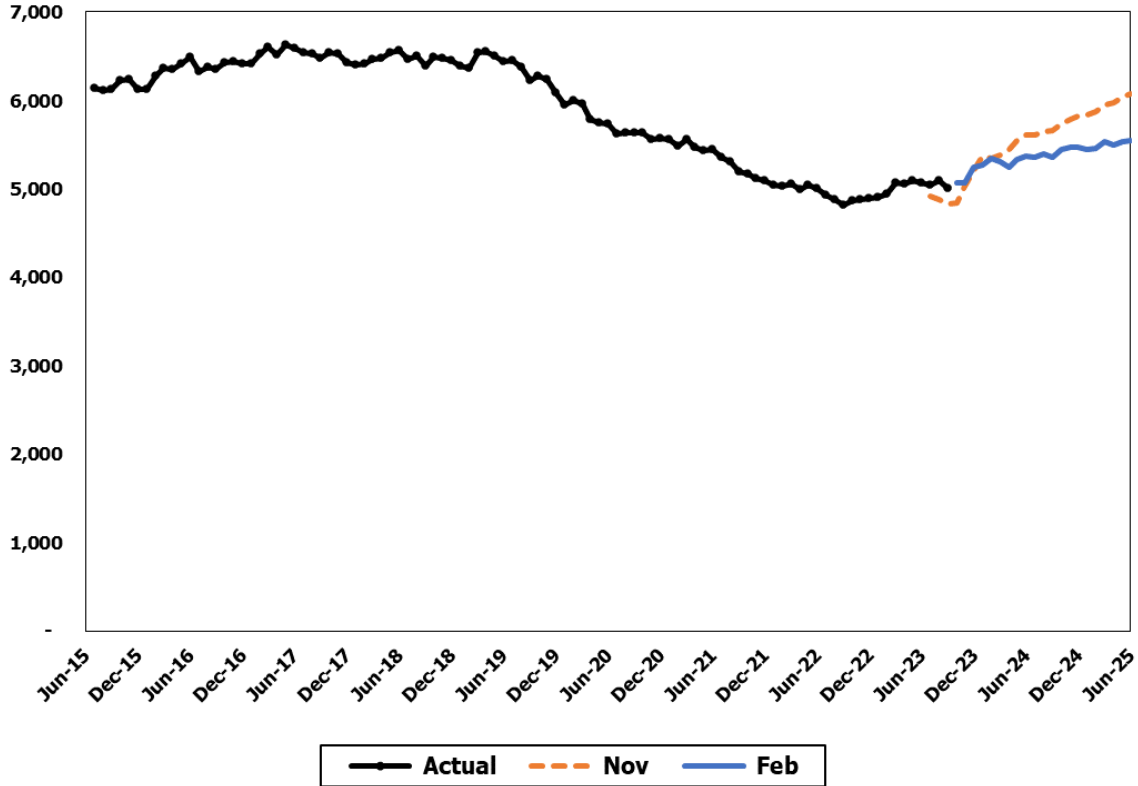


Licensed Foster Care



The Licensed Foster Care (LFC) caseload is a forecast of the number of children in licensed foster care during a calendar month. Financial assistance for licensed foster care includes a monthly stipend, medical care, and a variety of additional services. This caseload has two components – Basic Foster Care & Receiving Care (BFCRC) and Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS). As of September 2023, about 91.1 percent of LFC cases were BFCRC cases.

Forecast Comparisons (Fiscal Year Averages)

Fiscal Year	Nov-23 Forecast	Feb-24 Forecast	Nov to Feb Difference	Percent Difference
2024	5,198	5,199	1	0.0%
2025	5,835	5,458	-377	-6.5%

The February 2024 forecast is, on average, 188 cases or 3.4 lower than the November 2023 forecast for the 2023-25 Biennium.

Tracking the Current Forecast

Month	Nov-23			Percent
	Forecast	Actual	Variance	Variance
Jul-23	4,922	5,036	115	2.3%
Aug-23	4,884	5,091	208	4.2%
Sep-23	4,823	5,007	184	3.8%

Actuals are tracking, on average, 169 cases or 3.3 percent above the November forecast.

Fiscal Year Caseload Change

	Fiscal Year	Caseload	Change from Prior Year	Percent Change
Actual	2016	6,251		
	2017	6,467	216	3.5%
	2018	6,493	25	0.4%
	2019	6,463	-29	-0.5%
	2020	6,069	-394	-6.1%
	2021	5,549	-520	-8.6%
	2022	5,117	-432	-7.8%
	2023	4,949	-168	-3.3%
Forecast	2024	5,199	250	5.1%
	2025	5,458	259	5.0%

The February forecast includes a revised step adjustment to account for the effects of 2SHB 1227 (Chapter 211, Laws of 2021), which changed standards, effective June 30, 2023, for court ordered placement of a child into foster care and for the licensing of persons who provide foster care to a relative. It is expected that these changes will both reduce the number of children placed into foster care and increase the share of caregivers who are licensed. The size of the step adjustment has been reduced in this forecast because the number of initial licenses issued under the new provisions has been lower than was assumed in the November 2023 forecast.

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) has updated its caseload reporting processes and early reports show actual LFC case counts to be higher than the data used for the November forecast. The reduction to the February forecast for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 when compared to the November forecast is due to the reduced size of the step adjustment for 2SHB 1227.

Risks to the Forecast

Risks to the LFC forecast are high. The LFC caseload declined from April 2019 before stabilizing in late 2022. Most of the caseload growth in this forecast is driven by the step adjustment modeling the impact of new licensing processes for kinship caregivers, for which there is currently limited data.