



## Testimony in Support of LD 2097

### **"Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Alleviate the Staffing Crisis in the Child Protective Services System"**

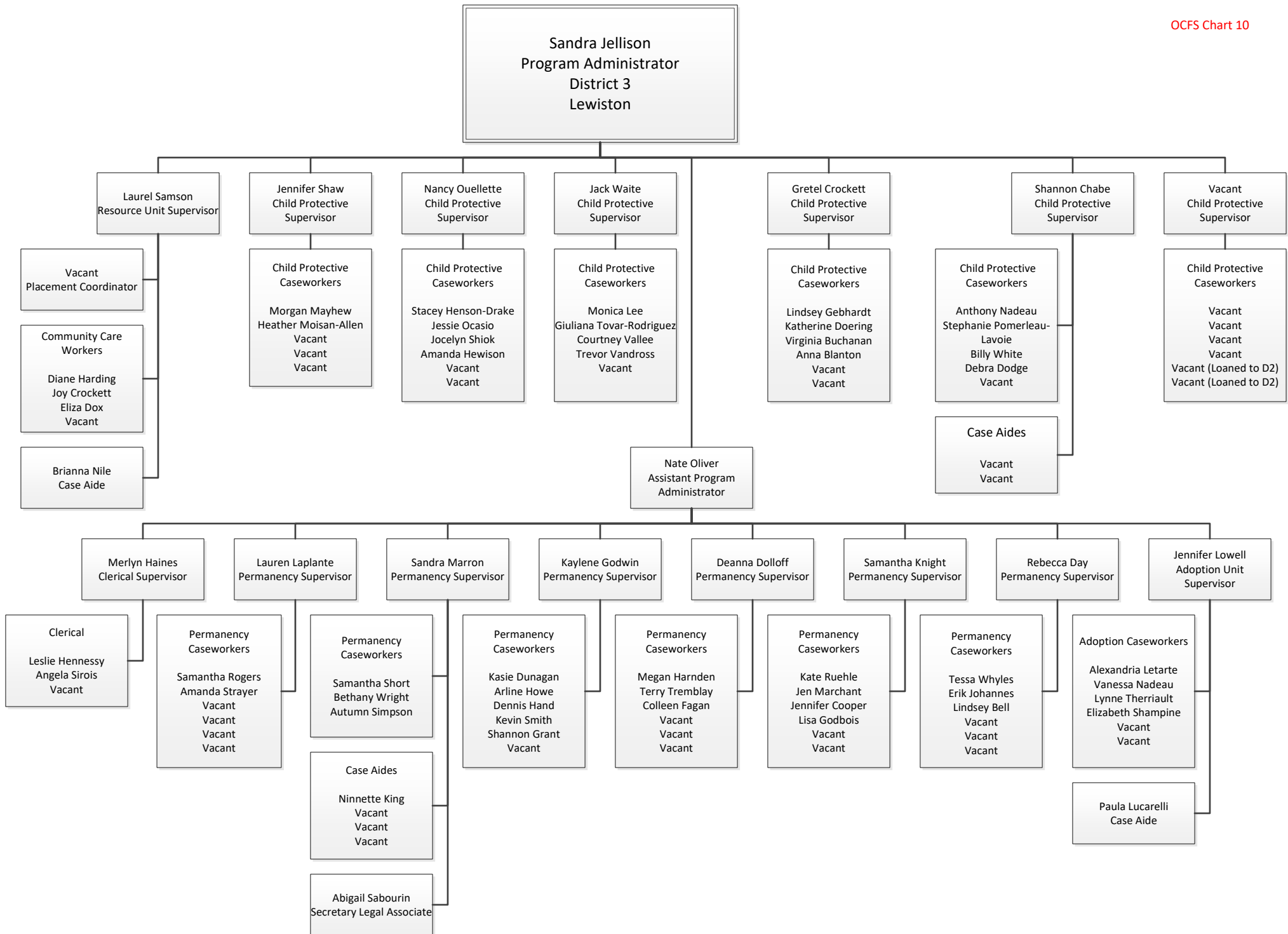
Sen. Baldacci, Rep. Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Rep. Amy Arata, I represent HD 104, which includes New Gloucester and part of Gray, and I am pleased to testify in support of LD 2097.

As a member of the Government Oversight Committee (GOC), I have been made aware of the challenges within the Office of Child and Family Services, particularly in the area of staffing. A few months ago, Sen. Keim and I met with caseworkers who wanted to speak with us privately. What they shared turned out to be the same information that had been reported by numerous caseworkers to GOC, that there aren't enough caseworkers. This leads to those remaining being overworked, leading to poor job performance, leading to burnout, leading to resignations, leading to a lack of caseworkers, thus repeating the cycle. One of the older caseworkers said, "I wish we still had Case Aides, they freed up a lot of our time". This piqued our interest, since we had been told that only those with certain degrees can be hired as caseworkers and we had been trying to figure out how to recruit more people for these crucial jobs.

A college degree is not required to become a Case Aide and they can perform numerous tasks such as delivering documents, driving children to appointments, and supervising children in the office or hotels. I have included the job description with my testimony. Interestingly, although the Lewiston district has the most Case Aide vacancies, a search of Maine JobLink did not yield any results in Lewiston. LD 2097 would place a focus on advertising for these positions.

I am grateful that Governor Mills said that she will support this bill in her supplemental budget. However, the creation of new positions may not be required. Case Aide positions have already been funded by the legislature, but they are not being filled. I have included a chart which shows the vacancies. A new approach is needed. LD 2097 allows creativity and flexibility to meet the needs of potential employees when recruiting Case Aides. According to the January, 2024, issue of Maine Biz, there is a rise in people "unretiring". Also, stay-at-home parents of young children often look for paid work once their children are old enough to attend school. People with certain disabilities have work hour restrictions. Many people in Maine are looking for meaningful jobs with flexible hours. LD 2097 will allow DHHS to meet the needs of a unique workforce while providing crucial services to families and children.

Thank you for your consideration and please reach out if you have any questions.



# Child Protective Services Case Aide

at State of Maine, Bureau of Human Resources in Ellsworth, Maine, United States

How to Apply

 Copy Link

Job Posting: JC254005833

Posted On: Jan 20, 2024

Updated On: Jan 31, 2024

## Job Description

Child Protective Services Case Aide

Ellsworth , Maine , United States | Community & Social Services | Full-time  
Apply by: Feb. 1, 2024 Apply with Linkedin Apply  
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Child Protective Services Case Aide

Opening Date: January 18, 2024Closing Date: February 1, 2024Job Class  
Code: 5074

Grade: 18 (Pro/Tech)

Salary: \$18.47 – \$24.72/hr.Position Number: 02021-2101

Core Responsibilities:

As a Child Protective Services Case Aide, you will play a vital role in the support and reunification of families served by the Office of Child and Family Services – Child Welfare division. You will: · Supervise visits between children and their parents, sit with children in hotel and hospital placement, and transport clients for various visits and appointments · Make referrals to connect children, parents, and family members with needed services · Enter documentation into the Child Welfare information system, Katahdin · Maintain legal records and serve court paperwork A successful candidate will have strong interpersonal skills, organizational and computer skills. This position is part of a team dynamic that’s main objective is to assist, inform, and interact with the public.Your work will include significant travel within areas served by the local district office and will include occasional mandatory overtime.

Minimum Qualifications:

To qualify, your background must include training, education, or experience in office and client support work that demonstrates 1) competency in applying a proficient knowledge of the principles and

practices in assisting management with policies and procedures, and 2) the ability to use independent judgment, initiative, and decision-making on complex administrative and direct service activities. This position requires the possession of a valid Class C Maine Motor Vehicle Operator's License. Preference will be extended to candidate possessing the following skills/experience: 1. Prior experience working directly with children and families in a social services setting. 2. Skilled in the use of standard work-place applications (MS Word, EXCEL, Outlook, etc.).

Agency information:

The Department of Health and Human Services

(<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/>) (DHHS) is dedicated to promoting health, safety, resilience, and opportunity for Maine people. The Department provides health and social services to approximately a third of the State's population, including children, families, older Mainers, and individuals with disabilities, mental illness, and substance use disorders. The Department also promotes public health, operates two state psychiatric hospitals, and provides oversight to health care providers. The Office of Child & Family Services (OCFS), within DHHS is responsible for ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families through community networks, local resources, and life-long family connections throughout Maine. We have a current vacancy in our Ellsworth office.

Application Information:

Please submit all documents or files in PDF format. For additional information about this position please contact Victoria Davis, CPS Supervisor at (207) 286-2492 . To apply, please upload a recent resume (if available) and cover letter addressing each of the two competency areas identified in the above section. To request a paper application, please contact [Ashley.Smith@Maine.gov](mailto:Ashley.Smith@Maine.gov) ([Ashley.Vigue@Maine.gov](mailto:Ashley.Vigue@Maine.gov)) .

Benefits

No matter where you work across Maine state government, you find employees who embody our state motto-"Dirigo" or "I lead"-as they provide essential services to Mainers every day. We believe in supporting our workforce's health and wellbeing with a valuable total compensation package, including:

+ Work-Life Balance – Rest is essential. Take time for yourself using 13 paid holidays , 12 days of sick leave , and 3+ weeks of vacation leave annually. Vacation leave accrual increases with years of service, and overtime-exempt employees receive personal leave.

+ Health Insurance Coverage – The State of Maine pays 85%-100% of employee-only premiums (\$10,150.80-\$11,942.16 annual value), depending on salary. Use this chart to find the premium costs for you and your family, including the percentage of dependent coverage paid by the State.

+ Health Insurance Premium Credit – Participation decreases employee-only premiums by 5%. Visit the Office of Employee Health and Wellness for more information about program requirements .

+ Dental Insurance – The State of Maine pays 100% of employee-only dental premiums (\$350.40 annual value).

+ Retirement Plan – The State of Maine contributes 13.41 % of pay to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS), on behalf of the employee.

+ Gym Membership Reimbursement – Improve overall health with regular exercise and receive up to \$40 per month to offset this expense.

+ Health and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts – Set aside money pre-tax to help pay for out-of-pocket health care expenses and/or daycare expenses.

+ Public Service Student Loan Forgiveness – The State of Maine is a qualified employer for this federal program. For more information, visit the Federal Student Aid office .

+ Living Resources Program – Navigate challenging work and life situations with our employee assistance program.

+ Parental leave is one of the most important benefits for any working parent. All employees who are welcoming a child-including fathers and adoptive parents-receive four weeks of fully paid parental leave . Additional, unpaid leave may also be available, under the Family and Medical Leave Act (<https://www.maine.gov/bhr/state-employees/rules-policies/policy-practices-manual/Employee-Rights-and-Responsibilities-Federal>) .

+ Voluntary Deferred Compensation – Save additional pre-tax funds for retirement in a MaineSaves 457(b) account through payroll deductions.

+ Learn about additional wellness benefits for State employees from the Office of Employee Health and Wellness (<https://www.maine.gov/bhr/oeh/>) .

There's a job and then there's purposeful, transformative work. Our aim is to create a workplace where you can learn, grow, and continuously refine your skills. Applicants demonstrate job requirements in differing ways, and we appreciate that many skills and backgrounds can make people successful in this role.

As an Equal Opportunity employer, Maine State Government embraces a culture of respect and awareness. We are committed to creating a strong sense of belonging for all team members, and our process ensures an inclusive environment to applicants of all backgrounds including diverse race, color, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, physical or mental disability, religion, age, ancestry, national origin, familial status or genetics.

If you're looking for a great next step, and want to feel good about what you do, we'd love to hear from you. Please note reasonable accommodations are provided to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

Thinking about applying?

Research shows that people from historically excluded communities tend to apply to jobs only when they check every box in the posting. If you're currently reading this and hesitating to apply for that reason, we encourage you to go for it! Let us know how your lived experience and passion set you apart.

**To view full details and how to apply, please [login](#) or [create a Job Seeker account](#)**