



CENTER ON CHILDREN,
FAMILIES, AND THE LAW

30
YEARS

1987 to 2017

THIRTY-YEAR ANNIVERSARY REPORT 2016

30 YEARS STRONG

Helping the Helpers



Cheers to 30 Years!

The Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) was established in 1987 to serve as a home for interdisciplinary research, teaching, and public service on issues related to child and family policy and services. In 2017, we celebrate 30 successful years of enhancing the wellbeing of children, youth, and families.

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Our Mission

Helping the helpers: We provide an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to improve systems and outcomes for children and families.

About Us

The knowledge of child and family issues we gain is used in ways that make it easier to educate policy makers, scholars, service providers, and the general public. In fact, our work serves as the primary basis for new local, state, and national legislation and has been cited in court rulings, including the U.S. Supreme Court.



CENTER ON CHILDREN,
FAMILIES, AND THE LAW

A Letter from Our Director

Eve Brank



I'm writing this message from my back porch in mid-April. As I do every spring, I find myself marveling, not only at the way my tulips, hydrangeas, and hostas emerge from the recently frozen ground, but also at how they seem to multiply from the prior year. The two former owners of our home planted most of these. I continue to care for them because I feel a great deal of responsibility to take care of what has been given to me, but my beautiful yard is the result of someone else's foresight.

In similar ways, it feels like spring at CCFL. I became the new director in August 2016, and I can easily see how someone else's foresight

provided me with an accomplished group of colleagues who are doing impactful and important work. I am the beneficiary, but also I feel a great deal of responsibility to contribute as best I can to their continued success and growth.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we continue to provide training, technical assistance, research, and resources across the state, and we have worked to build stronger collaborations with our University of Nebraska colleagues from the Lincoln, Kearney, and Omaha campuses. Local and state policy makers, providers, and legal professionals know that CCFL is a trusted resource and partner in caring for those who help the most vulnerable of our society. Our national presence also continues to grow as we provide program evaluation and research for organizations serving children and families across the United States.

I hope you enjoy our 30th anniversary celebratory report and see all the ways the past three decades will shape our next 30 years!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eve Brank".

Eve Brank, J.D., Ph.D.
Director

“ Local and state policy makers, providers, and legal professionals know that CCFL is a trusted resource and partner in caring for those who help the most vulnerable of our society. ”

A Letter from Our Assistant Director

Kathy Olson

It is important to know where you came from, in order to know where you want to go. Perhaps this is a famous quote, or just a phrase that is important to me, but it popped into my head as I contemplated this message and inspired some reflections I want to share. Celebrating 30 years of success would not be meaningful without considering how this achievement came to pass. A vision of the first director, Dr. Gary Melton, to provide interdisciplinary expertise to enhance the work of child welfare professionals was first realized in 1987 with the initial formation of CCFL. I've had the pleasure and honor to be part of the Center since faculty were first hired in 1988, coinciding with the first modest grant to be received. More grant applications and awards regularly followed, and additional staff came on board. It now seems impossible that what started in an unfinished basement room with salvaged furniture and two part-time faculty has grown to a multi-floor and multi-site operation. There are now over 50 faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students working daily on a wide-variety of projects – locally, nationally, and internationally. Roller coaster rides are more fun than merry-go-rounds, and being part of the exponential growth of CCFL for most of my professional career has certainly been an exhilarating, wonderful ride!



However.... a report with impressive numbers and details of many significant projects only tells part of the story of the growth and success of CCFL. The strongest parts of our Center are the individual staff members, past and present. The stellar contributions of experienced and multi-faceted professionals have made those numbers mount and the successes happen. I'm proud every day that I have been able to work with each and every person who is, or has been, associated with CCFL. It is only because of these dedicated and impressive persons that a 30-year anniversary is possible, and that we are poised for great accomplishments in the future.

Kathy Olson

Gratefully,
Kathy Olson, J.D., M.A.
Assistant Director

“ There are now over 50 faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students working daily on a wide-variety of projects – locally, nationally, and internationally. ”



Who We Serve

At the Center on Children, Families, and the Law, we serve:

- The community
- The homeless
- Families
- Maltreated children
- Elders
- Care-workers
- Attorneys
- Judges
- Policymakers
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system
- Child welfare agencies (organizational systems)
- Therapists
- Local and state service providers
- Agencies
- Tribes
- Service coordinators
- Individuals with disabilities and their families
- Probation officers
- School personnel

Spotlight on 2016

Through our partnerships, CCFL is able to accomplish our goals and provide resources that help the helpers.

78,621

Participants involved in research

131

Partnerships

3,395

People trained

7,081

Hours of curriculum development

14,053

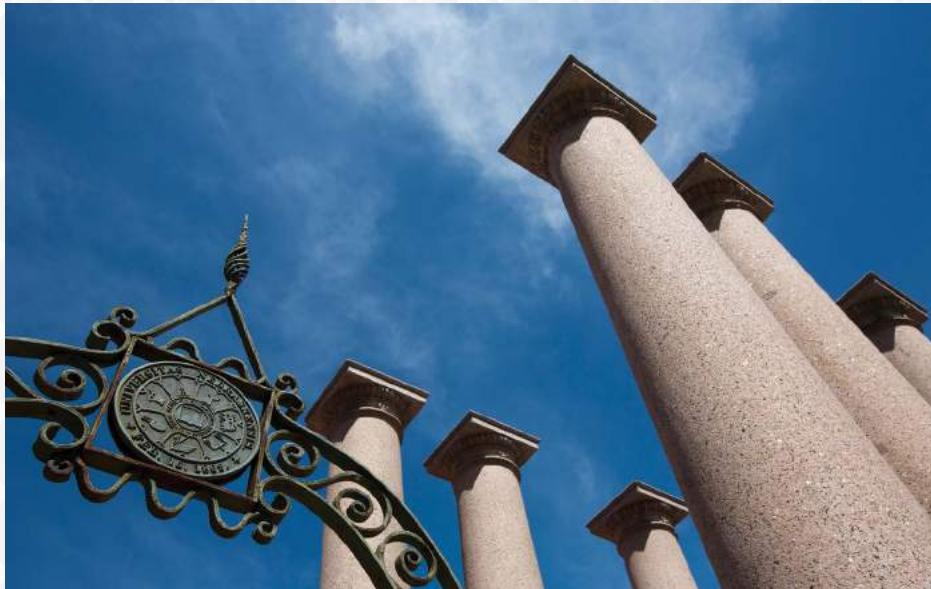
Resources available online

296,005

Unique visitors to websites we maintain

Our Dedication

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median number of years a person works for an employer is just 4.2 years. We're proud to share the average tenure with CCFL is 11 years. In fact, our faculty and staff have over 500 years of combined experience. Twenty-two of our colleagues have been with us for 10 years or more while eight have been here more than 20 years. Without this commitment and true passion for what we do, CCFL could not provide the knowledge and services it does.



4.2 Years

is the national tenure
as an employee

500 Years

of combined
experience at
CCFL

**22
Employees**

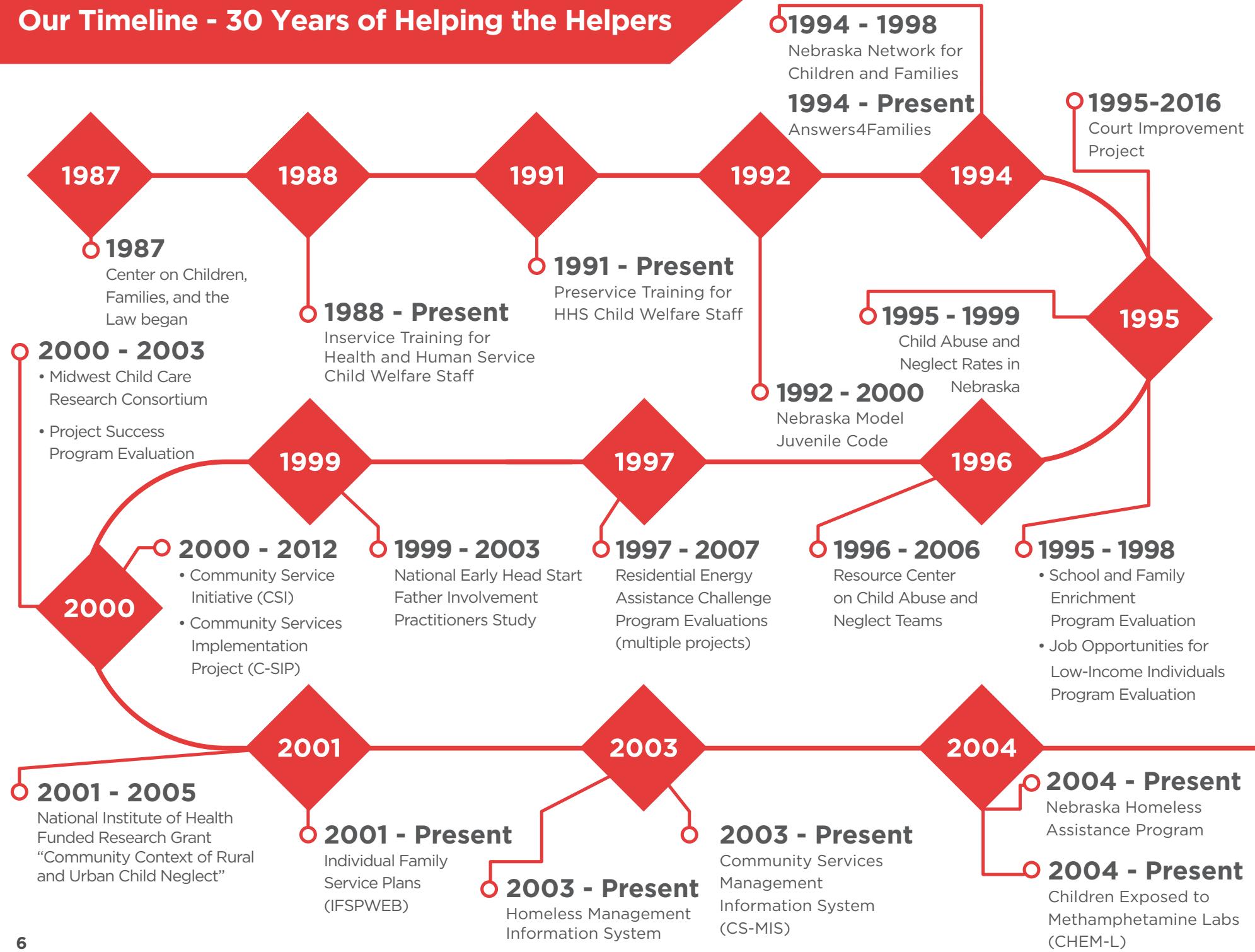
have worked for
CCFL for
10 years

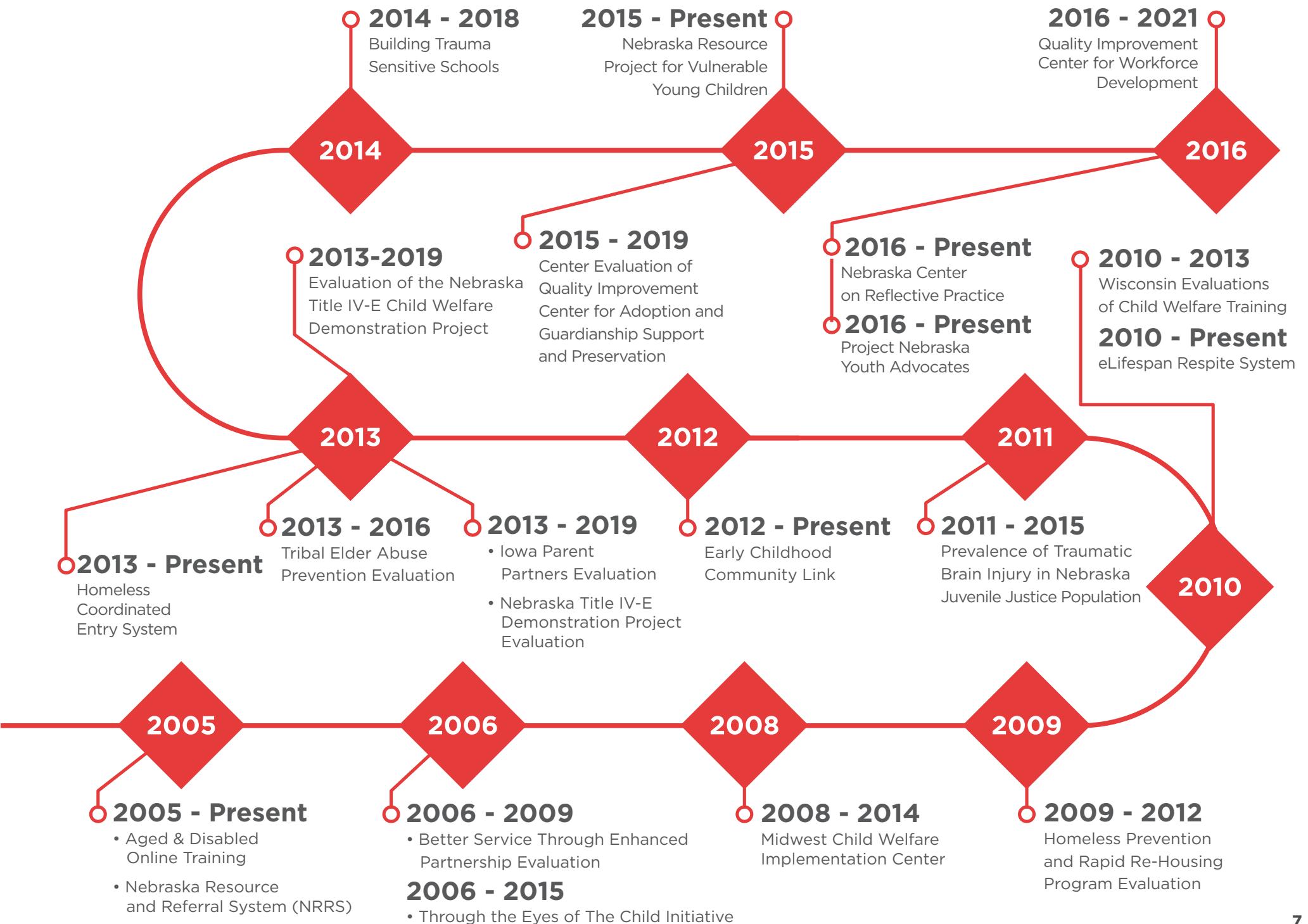
8

Employees

have worked for
CCFL for
20 years

Our Timeline - 30 Years of Helping the Helpers



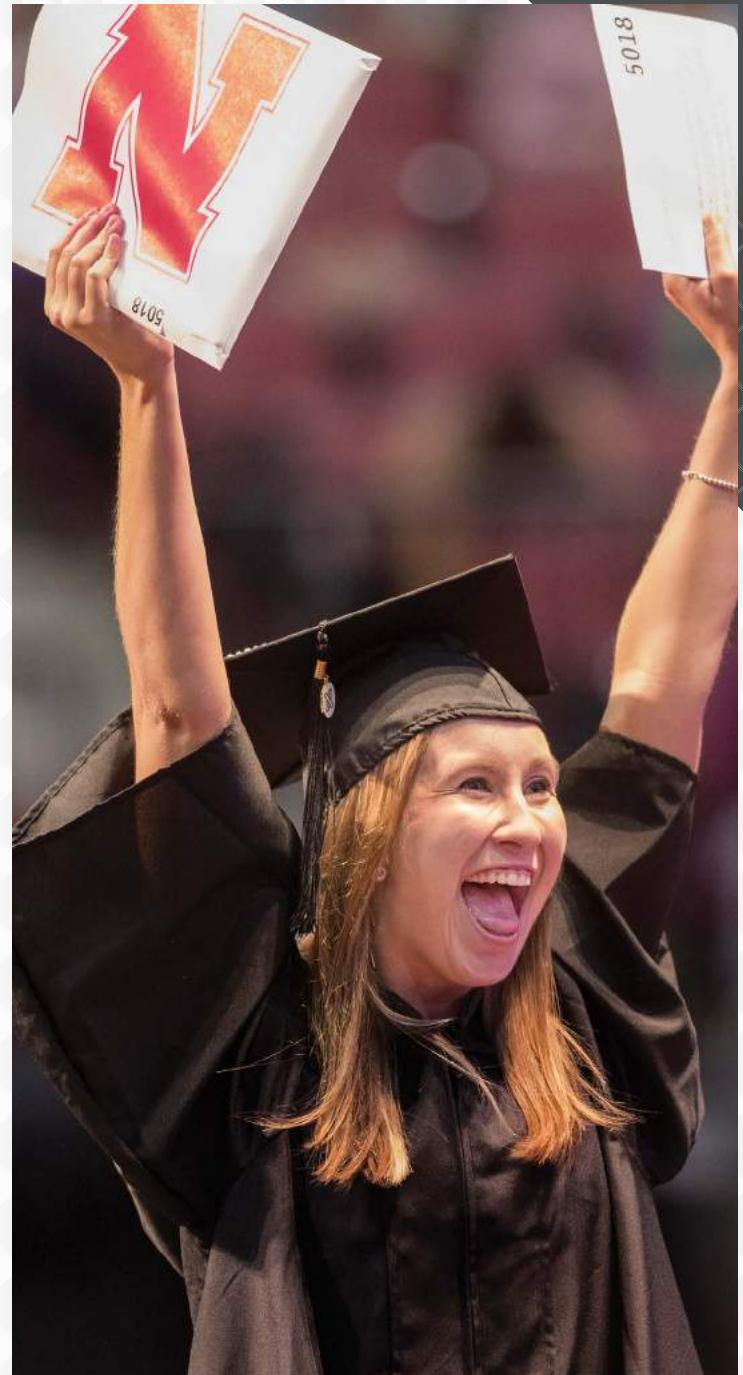


Our Mentorship and Training Process

Teaching and mentoring students is also a central goal for CCFL. We support many student assistantships and research experiences each year in a variety of departments and disciplines both at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska-Omaha. These students are able to have hands-on experience working in a policy-relevant center where they can put their research skills to use on real world problems.

Helping students help their future:

- Students assist in research activities at CCFL.
- Students assist with research activities, service activities, and publications that CCFL produces.
- Students work with the faculty and project directors to publish their research or present it at conferences.



Our Process

In order for a project to be successful, the process needs to be just as important as the results. To provide successful results, our professionals follow a four step process where they explore, evaluate, enable, and finally enhance to make sure all aspects are taken into consideration to provide rewarding results each and every time.



Explore

Experts at CCFL conduct thorough research before beginning a project. Projects are based on a platform of understanding in order to execute effective results.



Evaluate

Following the exploration stage, the research collected is appraised to ensure it is exactly what is needed for the situation.



Enable

Professionals who fit the skill sets needed are sought out to provide the resources necessary to launch projects into action. By engaging the right specialists, that are also highly experienced, positive results are guaranteed.



Enhance

To provide high effectiveness, results are re-evaluated in order to make any needed adjustments that will further boost the success of the project as a whole.

Our Services

The Center on Children, Families, and the Law provides a diverse array of technical assistance and consultation activities to human service agencies with the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families.



Needs Assessment

CCFL provides a wide range of needs assessments to courts, organizations and communities to assist them in determining priorities, making systems changes and improvements, and securing appropriate resources. Needs assessments may range from simple data collection to complex data collection, stakeholder interviews, scholarly research and application, and other methods.



Training

CCFL provides training for professionals, specific to their responsibilities in the child welfare or juvenile justice system. Customized training courses are developed to meet the needs of each profession, and can range from covering basic, entry-level information to the development of advanced skills. CCFL's training staff includes multidisciplinary experience in their respective fields prior to becoming trainers at CCFL.



Research

CCFL conducts basic and applied research on diverse issues related to children and families, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, early childhood, family decision making through the lifespan, and children's involvement with the legal system. This research has focused on a wide range of substantive topics, methodologies, and analytic techniques, and has been funded by state and federal agencies, as well as private foundations.



Legal/Policy Analysis

CCFL is uniquely qualified to assist policy makers, agency directors, judges, and legal practitioners with analyzing and implementing systemic changes to policies and practices for vulnerable populations. With work that involves extensive research, evaluation, training, and technical assistance on substantive areas, CCFL can provide unbiased, evidence-based approaches to develop and implement effective policies and practices that will improve the lives of children and families.



Community Services Planning

CCFL works with communities and agencies to gain a contextually rich understanding of the agencies, the consumers they serve, and the community to assist in human service planning. Next, CCFL works with communities and agencies to design and implement data collection systems, data collection protocols, and analysis and reporting tools to enable communities and agencies to effectively build capacity for ongoing system and program improvement.



Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is a systematic method for collecting and analyzing data to assess the design, implementation, improvement or outcomes of a program. Rather than determining need, it instead evaluates the program itself and assesses it based on the questions asked. There are a number of evaluation types, including content evaluation, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation.



Data Management

CCFL staff are proficient in the design, implementation, analysis, and reporting of a wide array of data, and specifically understand the challenges faced by human service providers when designing and managing their own data systems. To assist human service organizations of all sizes, CCFL provides expertise to agencies on modifying current data systems, training staff on system use, improving data collection methods, and helping extract and effectively interpret the collected data.



Resource Information

Finding and accessing useful resource information is critical for individuals and families in crisis or in need of services. CCFL has built the capacity to manage and maintain large databases of resource information collected by service providers and public agencies, and has developed methods for user-friendly access to that information through publically-accessible internet sites.



Technical Assistance

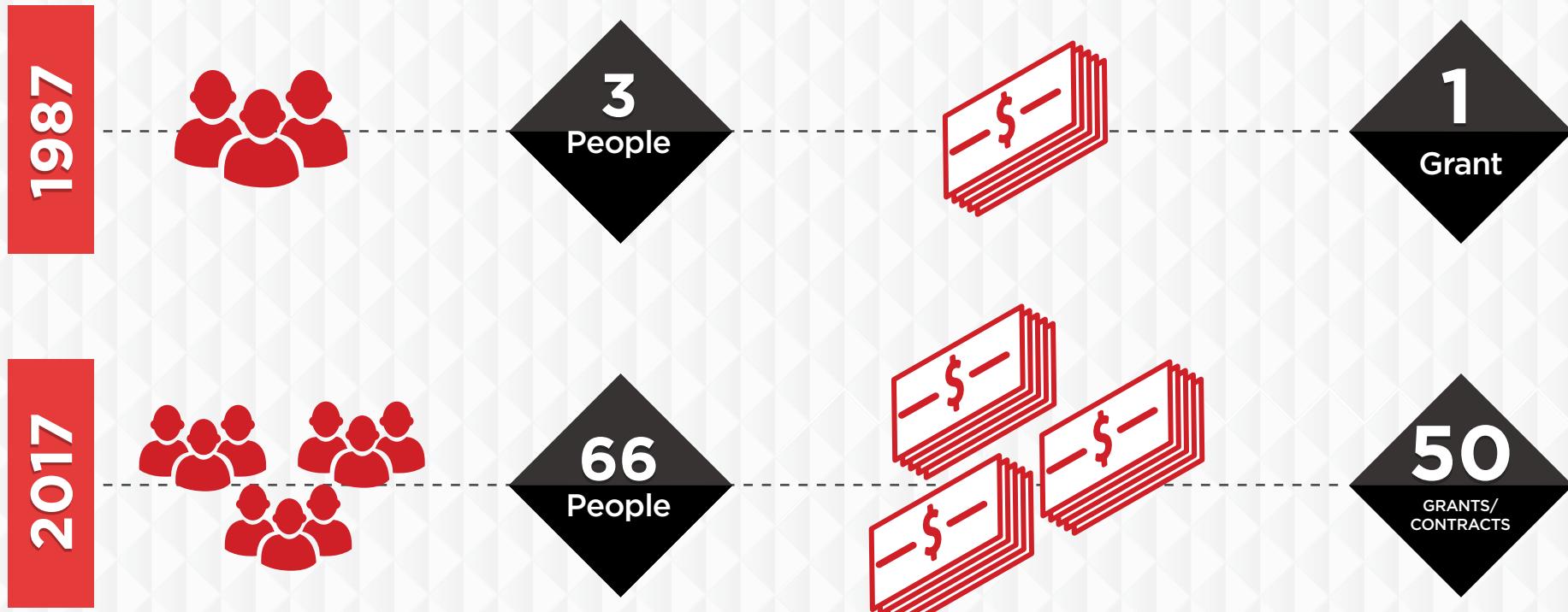
To successfully implement new or updated programs or to solve specific issues or problems, it is often important for an organization to receive technical assistance. Technical assistance is the process of providing targeted support to an entity to help solve a need or problem. CCFL provides technical assistance in a number of systems, including child welfare, homelessness, workforce development, early childhood, and others.



Consultation and Capacity Building

CCFL's faculty and staff bring a unique and comprehensive array of educational backgrounds and skills to support agencies that serve the wellbeing of children, youth, and families. CCFL has provided consultation and capacity-building services to a variety of human services agencies in substantive areas such as training, team development and support, coaching, change management, systems integration, program evaluation, implementation science, and human resource management.

Our Growth and Support



A sampling of our past and present funders include:

- **Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services**
 - Division of Children and Family Services
 - Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families**
 - Office of Refugee Resettlement
 - Office of Community Services
 - Administration on Aging
 - Children's Bureau
- **The Urban Institute**
- **Nebraska Department Education**
 - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- **U.S. Department of Justice**
 - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- **Nebraska Children and Families Foundation**
- **The City of Lincoln**
- **Lancaster County**
- **National Institutes of Health**
 - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- **The Woods Charitable Fund**
- **United Way of Lancaster and Saunders Counties**
- **Iowa Department of Human Services**
- **Summit County Children Services, Akron, OH**
- **Child Saving Institute**
- **Lincoln Action Program**
- **National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement**
- **Kauffman Foundation**
- **Nebraska Administrative Office of Probation**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), founded on February 15, 1869, is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. UNL is a member of the Big Ten Conference and the Big Ten Academic Alliance, and is classified within the Carnegie “Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity” category. Nebraska is also a land-grant university and a member of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU).

The Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) is one of 59 departments, centers, programs, or institutes located within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) at UNL. CCFL serves as an engaged research, training, and service arm of CAS.

SUPPORT CCFL

If you would like to support CCFL, please visit: ccfl.unl.edu/donate



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