

Nebraska's Safe Haven Law

DHHS statement regarding Safe Haven cases:

Children who come into the Nebraska child welfare system as a result of the Safe Haven law are handled as any other intakes and are not otherwise differentiated. The Department of Health and Human Services does not individually track Safe Haven cases.

DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services coordinates with law enforcement or a county attorney who has requested DHHS assistance with a child who has been removed from their parent's custody.

Historical data

Our records indicate the following numbers. Please note the description below for a few children initially classified as safe haven, but subsequently were determined not to be. These numbers are included in the total Safe Haven youth.

Year	# Children Safe Haven
2018	0
2017	2
2016*	3
2015	0
2014*	2
2013	2
2012	2
2011	1
1010	1
2009	1
2008	32

2008 is the year Safe Haven became law and every child age 0-18 could be determined Safe Haven.

*2016 – Two children initially placed in Safe Haven should not have been as parent had made private adoption arrangements.

*2014 – One child was initially placed in Safe Haven but parents made other private arrangements.

Safe Haven law

Legislative Bill 157 was introduced in the 2008 Legislative Session. LB 157 was passed on Final Reading, Feb. 7, 2008, by the vote of 41-1-7. The full text of LB 157 reads: "No person shall be prosecuted for any crime based solely upon the act of leaving a child in the custody of an employee on duty at a hospital licensed by the State of Nebraska. The hospital shall promptly contact appropriate authorities to take custody of the child." LB 157 did not provide an age limit for which a person would drop off a child at a hospital and not be prosecuted.

Legislative Bill 1 was introduced in the 2008 Special Session of the Legislature. LB 1 limits the age of a child who a person can drop off at a hospital and not be prosecuted to the age of 30 days or younger. Forty-three senators voted for the final version of LB 1. It was signed by Governor Heineman on November 21, 2008.