

# TRAVERSE® IN ACTION

## PERMANENCY CASEWORKER

*Cultivating Meaningful Connections to Support Permanency*



“ Traverse has improved my ability to be present and be available to families. ”

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Engaging children and families to build trust is critical during the permanency planning process. But inefficient tools and processes for managing information and administrative work often stand in the way of caseworkers' ability to spend the quality time that's needed with families to establish these meaningful relationships. This is a story about a permanency caseworker who uses Traverse, Northwoods' solution for child welfare, to put families first.

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### **CHASE SIMS-EKREM**—Social Caseworker II, Mesa County Department of Human Services, CO

Chase wants to spend as much time as possible engaging families and keeping kids safe, but previous systems for collecting and retrieving the information she needed to make permanency decisions with families weren't effective, which made it difficult to achieve these goals.

“There weren't enough descriptors to tell you what things really were. We may have 40 files with the same name, but we never knew the date or who it was associated with.”

Using Traverse, Chase can quickly and easily identify a family's extended supports within their ecosystem. “You can see possible associates or relatives when you're starting a new case. Being able to define a family's connections and look back into the past to see who the supports are for a family is really helpful.”

Not only can Chase surface these connections, but she can also understand their willingness to be involved with a family, plus find additional supports to help someone care for a child. The result?

“ I was able to locate extended family for a child who was really struggling with behaviors and unable to be stabilized in any local placements. Traverse helped me find and locate an extended family member who had previously had a minor relationship with the child. It allowed me to find their contact information, reach out to them, and end up placing the child in their care. ”

“This job is about cultivating human connection and Traverse has let me do that and do it more authentically. It let me put families first and not the paperwork, not the bureaucracy, not the tiny to-do list. I can put families first.”

— CHASE SIMS-EKREM

Mesa County Department of Human Services, CO



## ABOUT TRAVERSE & MESA COUNTY DHS

Mesa County DHS partnered with Northwoods to begin using Traverse in January 2020. The cloud-based software helps caseworkers easily and quickly collect and retrieve case information, while accessing electronic case files from anywhere—the agency, their homes, in court, or clients' homes.

They can mine critical information and data to make safety and permanency decisions, plus complete digital forms with families to refer them to services faster.

[Read the case study to learn more.](#)

Chase estimates she saves 6-10 hours every week because she can upload and find documents in minutes. In fact, when the agency was just getting started with Traverse, she was able to upload a month's worth of documentation for eight cases in just four hours total, which previously would have required around 30 hours (at minimum one hour per day all month until she was caught up).

As a result, Chase says she can now spend 70% of her time with families, whereas before it was only 40%. "It has improved my ability to be present and be available to families. I can make release forms, consent forms, or other documentation available to them too."

Traverse also makes it easier for Chase to collaborate with the rest of the permanency team. Regardless of where anyone is working, caseworkers can share documents and information with each other and their supervisors, plus get things back in a timely manner. This way, even someone who has little to no familiarity with a specific case or the content associated with it can step in at a moment's notice.

"We can keep our case files uploaded and available to other individuals almost instantaneously. When one of us isn't available, someone can step in and make real-time decisions that impact the family and help us achieve permanency faster."

“It created a universal language for everybody on our team. You have people from all walks of life who have been here for various times, various years, and different operating systems. We all have one universal language to communicate, move forward, and display our cases.”



Learn more:

[teamnorthwoods.com/products/traverse](https://teamnorthwoods.com/products/traverse)