

## The Forgotten First Responders: Retail Orphan Initiative and Avanade Join Forces to Expose the Hidden Crisis of Child Welfare Worker Turnover in the US

**SEATTLE, June 12, 2024** – Retail Orphan Initiative (RetailROI), in collaboration with Avanade, the leading Microsoft solutions provider, has developed a free web-based tool to address a critical but often overlooked issue: the high turnover among child welfare workers and its substantial financial and social costs. The new [Cost of Social Worker Turnover calculator](#) is designed to help states, agencies and legislators accurately quantify the short- and long-term financial impacts of this turnover, while also advocating for initiatives to reduce it.

Former U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and Co-Chair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption emphasized the profound impact of this issue: **“Social workers are the forgotten first responders.** They are often overlooked and woefully underpaid but dedicate their lives to some of the most vulnerable children in America. These children whose families have collapsed around them depend on local and state government and community partners to help secure a future that has been put in jeopardy. When there is a high rate of turnover with social workers, there is a direct and negative impact on the speed and careful attention given to children in their caseload, oftentimes delaying permanency by months or years. This high turnover rate is a significant barrier to children finding permanency and the government has a duty to do better for our youth by better supporting our workforce.”

Recent estimates in the United States reveal that the annual cost of turnover among child welfare workers amounts to a staggering \$22 billion nationally, affecting over 181,000 children who spend extended periods without a permanent home. Furthermore, the turnover significantly reduces the chance of children in care finding permanence—from an encouraging 74.5% down to a mere 17%.

The [Cost of Social Worker Turnover calculator](#), developed in partnership between RetailROI and Avanade’s digital creative consultancy specializing in Microsoft – Avanade X, allows users to input up to seven variables for a quick calculation and offers a companion spreadsheet with over 40 customizable inputs for those with more detailed data. This free resource aims to bring awareness to the economic and human costs of social worker turnover and promote strategies to mitigate it.

“When there is turnover, children often lose their advocate in the foster care system, leading to longer stays in care and increased court, transportation, and medical costs,” said Greg Buzek, President of Retail Orphan Initiative. “The financial costs are simply part of the equation. The more important issue is the devastating impact this has on the lives of these children in care.”

Pam Maynard, CEO of Avanade, commented: “The stories of these children and the dedicated social workers who support them touched my heart deeply. At Avanade, we are proud to contribute our technical expertise to this important project. Social workers play a crucial role in the well-being of children, and we are committed to supporting them and their mission to ensure every child can achieve permanency and stability.”

The Cost of Social Worker Turnover calculator is available for free and can be accessed at <https://socialcalc.retailroi.org/>. It is intended for use by states, agencies, legislators, news organizations, and other interested parties to drive awareness and action on this critical issue.

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**About RetailROI**

The Retail Orphan Initiative is a 501(c)(3) organization whose purpose is to raise awareness and provide real solutions for the more than 400 million vulnerable children worldwide. Through partnerships with retailers, vendors, and manufacturers, RetailROI helps to create internal programs for companies to provide assistance as well as participate in fundraisers throughout the year. Learn more at <https://www.retailroi.org/>

**About Avanade**

Avanade is the leading global provider of digital, cloud, AI and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem.

Together with Accenture, we have been recognized as Microsoft's Global SI Partner of the Year more than any other company. With the most Microsoft Most Valued Professionals, certifications (60,000+) and 18 (out of 18) Gold-level Microsoft competencies, we are uniquely positioned to help businesses grow and solve their toughest challenges.

Avanade is a responsible business committed to building a sustainable world through the power of people and Microsoft. We hold ourselves accountable to environmental, social and governance targets, ensuring our business is sustainable for the long term. Every day, our 60,000 professionals in 26 countries harness the power of their diverse backgrounds to make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Learn more at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com) and follow us on LinkedIn.

**Media Contact:**

Genevieve Raveau

+1 (416) 521-5477

genevieve.raveau@avanade.com