DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

Quarterly Progress Report
(Reducing Out-of-Home Children
and Inactive Cases)

Report Date: September 30, 2020
Reporting Period: SFY2020, Quarter 4

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Laws 2020, Second Regular Session, Chapter 58, Section 14, the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) is required to continue this report for data through June 2021. Previous versions of this report required that data be reported on the last day of the quarter of the reporting period. Beginning September 2019, the Department submits this report covering data for the prior quarter.

In state fiscal year 2019 (SFY19), DCS realigned its five Regions. As a result, comparisons of regional data prior to July 2019 must be taken into account as some staff and cases previously assigned to one Region in SFY19 were reassigned to a new Region in SFY20. The regional realignment resulted in changes in the regional names, reassignment of several counties to new regions; and moving specific sections and units to different regions and/or sections. A map of the new DCS Regions is provided as an attachment to this report (Attachment A).

During the fourth quarter of SFY 2020, the Department was forced to address the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, DCS continued to accept reports of abuse and neglect, respond to those reports within required timelines and continued to maintain monthly contact by DCS Specialist with children in out-of-home care, families and caregivers. Although the approach to in-person contact had to adjust based on recommendations of local, state and federal authorities, DCS continued to ensure it carried out its core mission to successfully engage children and families to ensure safety, strengthen families, and achieve permanency. Virtual visitation with children only occurred during the stay-at-home order.

PROGRESS SUSTAINING OPEN REPORTS, INACTIVE CASES, & IMPROVING CASELOADS

DCS has maintained the inactive cases well below the legislative benchmark of 1,000 since April 2017. In March 2017, DCS fell below the legislatively required benchmark of 1,000 inactive cases. From a peak of 16,014 in January of 2015, the Department now has only 81 inactive cases as of June 30, 2020, representing a 99 percent decrease. To avoid a return to higher numbers of inactive cases and to help improve caseloads, the Department uses performance management and other elements of the management system. DCS employed several sustainment measures to ensure inactive cases remain well below the benchmark. These include the implementation of performance management metrics to monitor and control the total number of open reports and the percentage of those reports that are overdue for investigation, completion and closure and the implementation of leader standard work to ensure routine follow-up.

The Department achieved the initial benchmark of less than 13,000 open reports six months ahead of the established target date in December 2016 having reduced the number of open reports to 9,611. From a peak of 33,245 open reports in April 2015, the Department reduced that to only 4,804 as of June 2020 (see Table 1) representing an 86 percent decrease. The benchmark was decreased to 8,000 starting the first quarter of SFY 2019 below which the Department has remained each reporting period since.

Additionally, DCS HR continues its efforts to hire and place DCS Specialists at a rate equal to or greater than departures from the Department. Sustained staffing levels help contribute to the reduced number of inactive cases, total open reports, and foster care population. The overall caseloads for DCS investigators continue to decline across most offices (see Table 2).

PROGRESS MADE REDUCING THE OUT-OF-HOME POPULATION

The Department continues to maintain a safe reduction in the historical out-of-home foster care population. The Department experienced a slight decrease in the number of children (-57) in OOH care in the fourth quarter of SFY20 compared to the third quarter of SFY20. The total OOH population includes all youth ages zero (0) through the age of twenty (20).

While the Department is slightly above the established benchmark of 13,964 established by the legislature, for the number of children in OOH care, it is important to note the number of youth in extended foster care (i.e. 18-20 year olds) continues to increase from 845 in June 2019 to 991 in June 2020. This is intentional as the Department implemented a strategic initiative to increase the successful transition of youth to adulthood, which includes providing more youth over the age of eighteen with independent living services and supports. During the 2019 legislative session (Arizona fifty-fourth legislature), Senate Bill 1539 was passed which allowed the Department to expand the extended foster care program for qualified young adults.

By slowing the entry rate and sustaining performance for children exiting care, the Department has been able to maintain a safe reduction of the foster care population since its historical high of 19,044 in 2016 to 14,152 in June 2020 representing a 26% decrease. The reduction in the number of children entering out-of-home care is the result of several factors. These include, but are not limited to, the additional standardized process tools including supervisory administrative and case progress review checklists, standardized safety discussion guides, and training staff to better engage a family's network to maintain children safely in the home. Improved response times also contribute to the reduction of children entering care as this enables DCS Specialists to make decisions that will help support families, provide services in a timely manner and avoid entry into care. In addition, this safe reduction in the number of children in out-of-home care is highlighted by no significant change in the re-entry rate for children who left care within the past 12 months.[1]

Through the continued application of monthly clinical staffings on reunification cases using a standardized process, ongoing workers have been able to maintain the rate of children exiting care. By way of these standard process activities, paired with the continued use of cursory case reviews and Fostering Sustainable Connections, the Department has safely maintained a reduction of the out-of-home care population during SFY2020.

Table 1 – Benchmark Performance

		Q1FY19	Q2FY19	Q3FY19	Q4FY19	Q1FY20	Q2FY20	Q3FY20	Q4FY20
Inactive Cases [1]									
	Benchmark (less than)	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	Actual	183	302	355	179	177	308	216	95
Inactive Cases by disposition									
	Investigation Phase	74	188	227	155	149	271	188	81
	Out-of-Home Cases	16	16	16	2	3	5	3	0
	In-Home Cases	93	98	112	22	25	32	25	14
Number of Open Reports									
	Benchmark (less than)	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
	Actual	6,562	6,695	6,554	6,586	7,569	7,326	6,973	4,804
Number of Out-of-Home Children									
	Benchmark (less than)	15,192	14,889	14,591	14,299	13,964	13,964	13,964	13,964
	Benchmark (% reduction	2%	2%	2%	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Actual	14,241	14,209	13,841	14,205	14,223	14,142	14,209	14,152

Footnotes

[1] Number of inactive cases is the actual figure as of the last Monday of the reporting period.

[2] As a result of Laws 2019, 1st Regular Session Ch. 263, Sec. 141 which continued this report, the benchmark established by the Legislature for number of out-of-home children was no longer based on a 2 percent reduction but a static number of 13,964.

Tables 2 and 3 show the caseload by section (field office) for investigations, out-of-home children, and in-home cases. Investigations are the number of open reports assigned to each office. Out-of-home represents the number of children in ongoing cases assigned to each office. In-home cases represents the number of cases assigned to each office.

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[1] DCS Monthly Operational and Outcome Report (MOOR): https://dcs.az.gov/news-reports/performance-measures

Table 2 – Headcount and Caseload Performance (SFY20-Third Quarter)

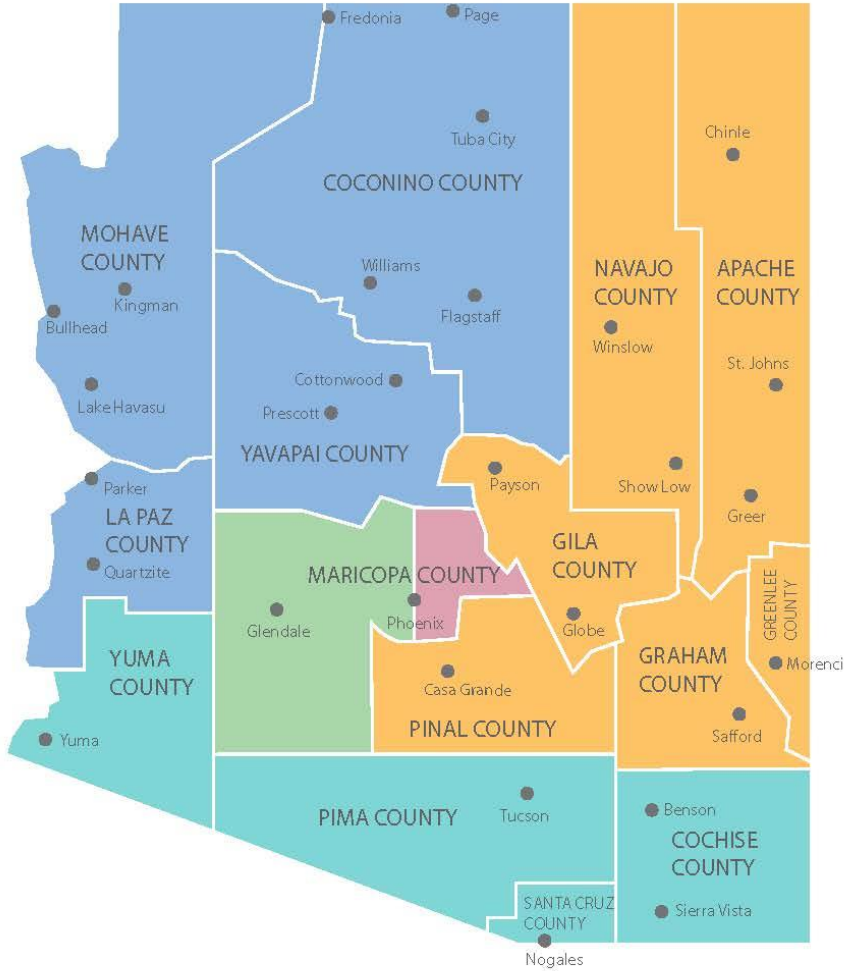| Region [1]	Section #	Section name	FTE		Workload					
			Investigators	Case Managers	# Open Reports (investigations)	# of In home cases	# of Out-of-Home Children [2]	Investigation (reports per worker)	In Home (cases per worker)	Out of Home (children per worker)
Maricopa-East (10)	3	Osborn	18	18	261	---	473	14	---	26
	4	In Home	---	46	28	491	35	1	11	1
	5	Mesa	19	19	250	---	414	13	---	22
	6	Gilbert	18	18	349	---	458	20	---	26
	7	Tempe	19	19	312	---	616	16	---	32
	8	South Mountain	15	15	250	---	394	16	---	26
	9	North Central	19	19	350	---	548	18	---	28
	10	Permanency - South Mountain		44	6	---	1497	0	---	34
South (20)	1	Eastside Loop	15	18	145	---	259	10	---	15
	2	Tucson North - Oracle	14	14	190	---	300	14	---	22
	3	Tucson South - Valencia	14	14	170	---	339	12	---	24
	4	Tucson Midtown - Oracle	9	9	196	---	171	21	---	19
	5	Madera A - 4th Ave.	15	15	153	---	262	10	---	17
	6	Permanency - Alvernon	0	30	---	---	539	---	---	18
	7	Alvernon	12	12	160	---	281	13	---	23
	8	Cochise County	11	11	156	---	181	14	---	17
	9	Madera C / Nogales	16	16	213	---	264	13	---	17
	10	In Home	0	32	13	254	82	0	8	3
	11	Yuma	12	12	174	---	229	14	---	18
Northwest (30)	1	Prescott/Prescott Valley	13	13	158	58	197	12	4	15
	3	Coconino County / Cottonwood	13	13	133	---	258	10	---	20
	4	Bullhead City/Lake Havasu	9	9	109	38	188	12	4	21
	5	Kingman	11	21	99	---	566	9	---	27
Northeast (40)	3	Globe / Payson / Safford	7	14	101	27	258	14	2	18
	4	St. Johns/Winslow/Show low	4	8	81	7	123	20	1	16
	5	Apache Junction/Kearney	16	16	221	38	517	14	2	32
	6	Casa Grande/Coolidge	15	15	244	56	483	16	4	33
Maricopa-West (50)	1	AHIT	25	---	1	---	0	0	---	---
	3	In Home	0	45	34	608	26	1	14	1
	4	Thunderbird	18	18	390	---	566	21	---	31
	5	Peoria	16	16	235	---	381	14	---	23
	6	Glendale/Durango	19	19	243	---	476	12	---	24
	7	Avondale/Advocacy	20	20	268	---	573	13	---	28
	8	Permanency	---	44	3	---	1255	---	---	29
	12	West 101	20	20	300	---	628	15	---	32
	13	Pinnacle Peak	13	13	174	---	326	13	---	24
105, 106 - Other	various	OCWI, GH/FH, Other	68	---	803	---	46	12	---	---

- As of Q1 FY2019, Specialists in a trainee status are accounted for in FTE figures in each section with an equal distribution of 66% caseload.

- In Home (IH) cases are based on a hand count of cases actively managed in each respective Region.

- IH cases assignments differ Regionally. Maricopa East, Maricopa West and South Regions employ specific IH units who manage IH cases only, while Northeast and Northwest Regions and portions of South Region have mixed units that may carry IH or OOH cases.

- FTE assignments to investigations or case management are based on assignment of 50% investigative and 50% ongoing in Maricopa East, Maricopa West and Northwest Regions. South and one Northeast Region sections employ a distribution of 34% Investigations and 66% ongoing.

- During the 4th Quarter of SFY2020, Section 4 in South Region was closed and cases were reassigned to other South Region sections.

Table 3 – Headcount and Caseload Performance (*SFY20-Fourth Quarter*)

Region [1]	Section #	Section name	FTE		Workload					
			Investigators	Case Managers	# Open Reports (investigations)	# of In home cases	# of Out-of-Home Children [2]	Investigation (reports per worker)	In Home (cases per worker)	Out of Home (children per worker)
Maricopa-East (10)	3	Osborn	19	19	134	---	480	7	---	25
	4	In Home	---	43	31	481	13	1	11	0
	5	Mesa	19	19	171	---	475	9	---	25
	6	Gilbert	20	20	202	---	457	10	---	23
	7	Tempe	20	20	244	---	579	12	---	28
	8	South Mountain	19	19	214	---	400	11	---	21
	9	North Central	19	19	202	---	528	11	---	28
	10	Permanency - South Mountain		45	3	---	1488	0	---	33
South (20)	1	Eastside Loop	15	18	77	---	268	5	---	15
	2	Tucson North - Oracle	18	18	225	---	392	13	---	22
	3	Tucson South - Valencia	14	14	162	---	360	12	---	26
	4	Tucson Midtown - Oracle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	5	Madera A - 4th Ave.	17	17	96	---	251	6	---	15
	6	Permanency - Alvernon	0	31	---	---	550	---	---	18
	7	Alvernon	16	16	137	---	393	8	---	24
	8	Cochise County	10	10	101	---	188	10	---	19
	9	Madera C / Nogales	16	16	149	---	289	9	---	18
	10	In Home	0	31	6	248	75	0	8	2
	11	Yuma	12	12	89	63	233	7	---	19
Northwest (30)	1	Prescott/Prescott Valley	9	9	118	65	192	13	13	21
	3	Coconino County / Cottonwood	12	12	105	---	278	8	---	22
	4	Bullhead City/Lake Havasu	10	10	62	42	167	6	8	17
	5	Kingman	10	19	71	---	558	7	---	29
Northeast (40)	3	Globe / Payson / Safford	8	15	95	29	245	13	6	17
	4	St. Johns/Winslow/Show low	5	9	71	6	129	16	2	15
	5	Apache Junction/Kearney	17	17	164	37	533	10	5	32
	6	Casa Grande/Coolidge	18	18	199	30	478	11	6	27
Maricopa-West (50)	1	AHIT	25	---	2	---	---	0	---	---
	3	In Home	0	47	33	562	15	1	12	0
	4	Thunderbird	19	19	201	---	515	10	---	27
	5	Peoria	16	16	182	---	385	11	---	24
	6	Glendale/Durango	19	19	157	---	476	8	---	24
	7	Avondale/Advocacy	21	21	147	---	552	7	---	27
	8	Permanency	---	44	2	---	1222	---	---	28
	12	West 101	21	21	181	---	614	8	---	29
	13	Pinnacle Peak	15	15	125	---	326	8	---	22
105, 106 - Other	various	OCWI, GH/FH, Other	68	---	646	---	48	10	---	---

 - As of Q1 FY2019, Specialists in a trainee status are accounted for in FTE figures in each section with an equal distribution of 66% caseload.

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**ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT
of CHILD SAFETY**

Regional Map

NORTHWEST REGION

Coconino, Mohave, La Paz and Yavapai Counties

NORTHEAST REGION

Apache, Graham, Greenlee, Gila, Navajo and Pinal Counties

MARICOPA - WEST

Maricopa County - West of 7th Avenue

MARICOPA - EAST

Maricopa County - East of 7th Avenue

SOUTH REGION

Cochise, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Yuma Counties

OFFICE OF CHILD WELFARE INVESTIGATIONS

Statewide

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE-1-888-SOS-CHILD

1-888-767-2445

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