DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

Quarterly Benchmark Progress Report
(Filling FTE Positions and Reducing the Backlog)
March 2017

PROGRESS MADE IN INCREASING THE NUMBER OF FILLED FTE POSITIONS

There has been focused work by the Department to fill 100 percent of DCS positions and reduce turnover in order to sustain sufficient staff resources that provide quality services to the children and families it serves. Significant effort has taken place to fill positions statewide, including routine planning and information sharing meetings between Executive management, the Regional Program Administrators and Human Resources Managers. Recruitment and retention data is tracked and reviewed bi-monthly. Action plans are developed when areas of concern are identified through this tracking process. The Department continues its active recruitment process to fill all Child Safety Specialist positions. As of February 1, 2017, the Department had filled 95% of the 1,406 funded positions.

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) continues to employ a professional recruiter to develop community and organizational partnerships to create a pathway of qualified candidates. The Department has centralized the statewide recruitment of the DCS Specialist classification, under the direction of the Recruitment Manager. The Department continues its active recruitment process to fill all positions.

In CY 2016, the Department of Child Safety (DCS) engaged in several initiatives to help recruit and retain DCS staff, particularly the DCS Specialist and Supervisor positions. Key among these was a new position entitled DCS Specialist Trainee that was established for new hires for the first 22 weeks of employment. When the new employee successfully completes the 22 weeks of initial training, the DCS Specialist Trainee will be promoted to a DCS Specialist position which includes the first of two tenure based pay increases. This significant change in the structure of the salary schedule was implemented for Specialists as the Department believes that by providing these increases earlier in the first year of employment, employees who may leave employment due to a low salary may be retained. Instead of providing the initial salary increase at 12 months, the increase now occurs after 22 weeks with Specialists in good standing being able to reach maximum salary after one year and 22 weeks compared to the prior schedule of reaching maximum salary at 24 months from the date of hire.

The DCS Human Resources (HR) team continues to strive to achieve a goal of 40 new hires per month, which exceeds the average number of staff leaving the Department. In order to reach this goal, the team contacts all applicants immediately upon receipt of the initial application, sends recruitment packets via email to expedite the transmission of information, conducts follow-up emails or phone calls to applicants to attain missing or incomplete information, and schedules the new hire interview immediately upon receipt of the completed application. Additionally, the HR team has an assigned staff member to assist in completing background reference checks to hasten the process. The HR team continues to monitor the number of new hires who leave DCS within

their first year to better enable future analysis of this information. After maintaining an average of 60.5 hires for the first 8 months of CY 2016, DCS is now recruiting for selected Regions as needed. As fewer staff are leaving and the Department is able to hire more Specialists than are exiting, it was able to reduce its target goal of 60 new Specialist hires per month to 40 per month starting in August 2016 (see Chart 1 below).

In November 1, 2016, DCS initiated a Pilot program, implementing the Predictive Index (PI) assessment to candidates for the Child Safety Specialist positions in Central Region. The PI assessment is a science-based methodology that helps to understand what drives an individual's workplace behaviors to better ensure alignment between candidates and their actual job duties and improve actual on-the-job performance.

Effective March 14, 2017, all candidates for the DCS Specialist position are sent a link to complete the PI. This includes candidates for the DCS Specialist position assigned to the DCS Child Abuse Hotline.

The PI is a reliable resource for predicting performance potential in new hires. At this time, the Department is only gathering data for use of PI with DCS in the future. The result of a candidate's PI will not determine the hiring decision. The data being obtained will be utilized to create stronger job Performance Requirement Options (POR) for the DCS Specialist series and DCS as a whole. DCS HR is also planning to use the data to develop stronger interview questions for prospective candidates. It is the goal of the Department that PI will be extended to all job classifications in the future.

The Department continues to post job listings/requisitions for specific regions on the azstatejobs.gov website to encourage applications from individuals searching for employment within a specific community.

In February 2016, the Department implemented a career ladder for case aides with five or more years of experience with DCS to promote into Child Safety Specialist Trainee position, which brings staff already familiar with the child welfare system to areas of need.

To expedite the new hire fingerprint card process, a fulltime person at the Department of Public Safety continues to be available to process requests for fingerprint cards. In July 2016, DCS started processing fingerprint clearance cards through FieldPrint which is a company that provides electronic fingerprinting collection and processing. This process is expected to reduce the processing time to approximately 3-5 business days.

In addition to the Department's efforts to reduce turnover and improve recruitment of DCS Child Safety Specialists, the Department is also committed to minimizing the overall attrition of all DCS employees by improving the onboarding experience, and striving to improve overall job satisfaction with the agency. Chart 2 shows the Department's significant improvements in reducing turnover for all DCS employees in the past two quarters. Data for March is preliminary and will updated in future reports.

Chart 1 – DCS Specialist Hires and Target Trends

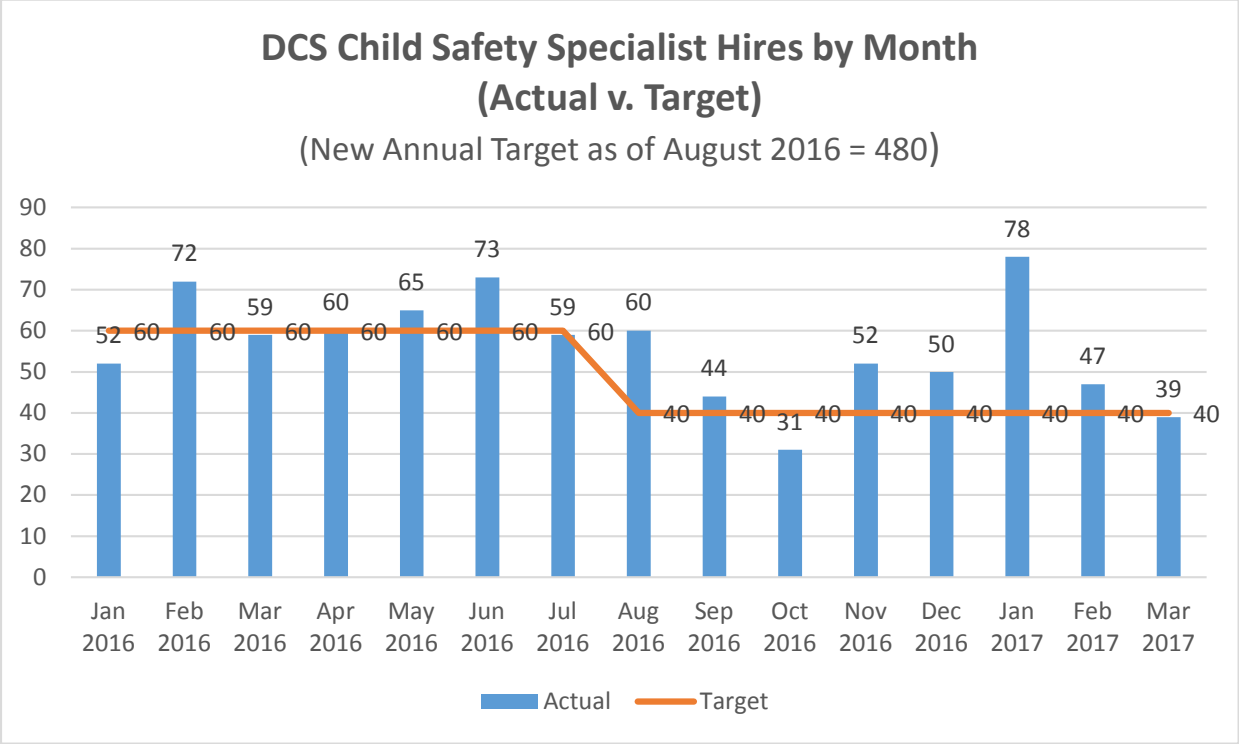
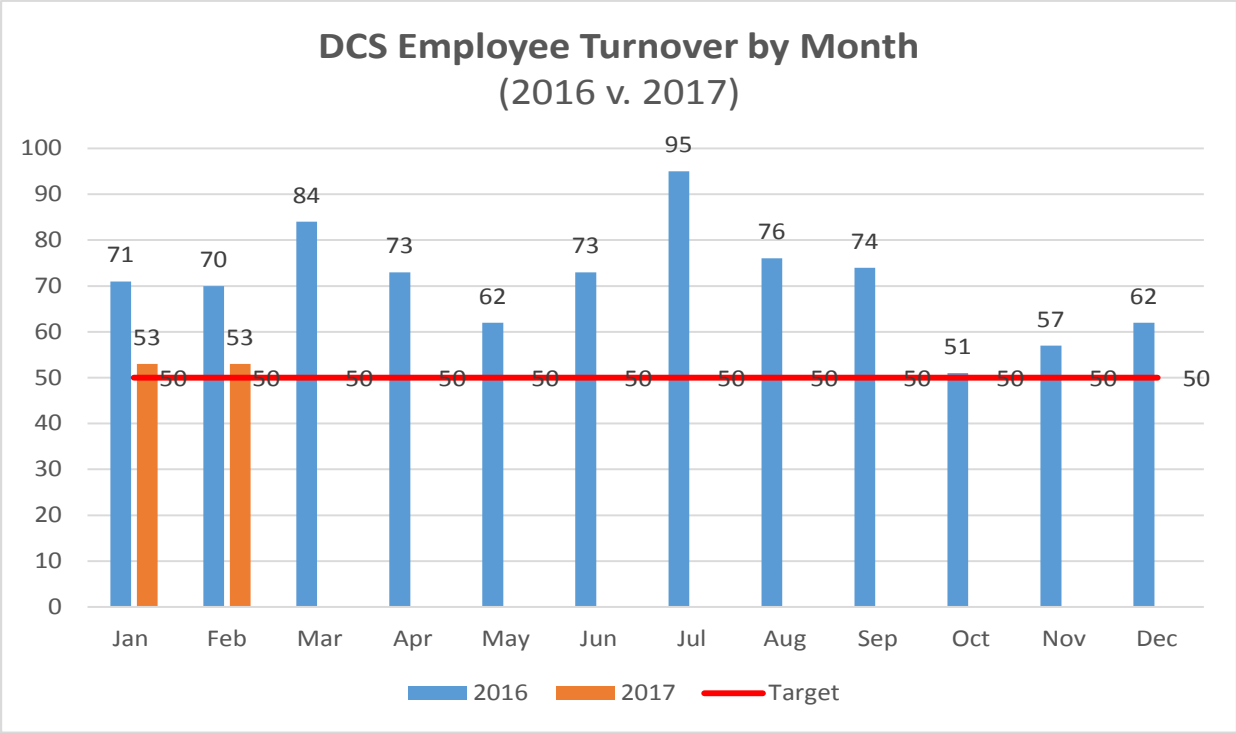


Chart 2 – All DCS Employee Attrition Trends



*DCS Employee Turnover is not available for the month of March at the time this report was due and will be updated in the next quarterly report.

PROGRESS REDUCING INACTIVE CASES AND IMPROVING CASELOADS

During the third quarter of FY 2017, the Department maintained activities and initiatives across the state to continue reducing the backlog and total number of open reports. Additionally, the DCS human resources department has made concerted efforts to hire and place specialists at a rate equal to any departures from the Department. As a result of the sustained staffing levels, reduced number of backlog inactive cases and total open reports, and reduced foster care population, the overall caseloads for DCS investigators, ongoing Specialists and in-home Specialists has reduced this quarter.

The Department achieved a milestone this quarter in its effort to reduce the backlog. In March 2017, DCS fell below the legislatively required benchmark of 1,000 backlog cases. From a peak of 16,014 in January of 2015, the Department now has only 746 backlog cases as of March 27, 2017representing a 95 percent decrease. The Department will continue its efforts to reduce the backlog and remain below the legislatively required benchmark. Future efforts will focus on maintenance of caseload levels to avoid a return to higher numbers of backlog cases. Already, in many portions of the state, efforts transitioned from reduction initiatives to sustainment activities as a means of maintaining the positive gains achieved and preventing the recurrence of an investigative backlog. In those particular offices, sustainment measures 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, and the implementation of leader standard work to ensure routine follow-up.

In offices that were carrying a higher than desired number of open reports and inactive cases, the Department engaged in “burn down” activities this quarter. This involved staff from across the state pitching in to help complete critical duties triaged by supervisors and managers to reduce backlog. Additionally, DCS continues the use of selected assistance work teams and, Regional action plans, while leveraging provider partnerships and maintaining weekly performance huddle calls as a means of maintaining progress and establishing performance accountability. As a result of these efforts, the Department has achieved the benchmark of less than 13,000 open reports six months ahead of the established target date. From a peak of 33,245 open reports in April 2015, the Department has reduced that to only 6,586 open reports as of March 27, 2017 representing an 80 percent reduction (see Table 2).

PROGRESS MADE REDUCING THE OUT-OF-HOME POPULATION

While much of the emphasis has been focused on continued reduction of the backlog and total number of open reports, additional efforts have been made to reduce the out-of-home foster care population. The Department continues to realize progress in fiscal quarter 3, reducing the out-of-home foster care population by 4.25 percent (762 children) ending with 17,174 children in care. The progress made since the baseline period of March 31, 2016 is a 9.2 percent reduction (1,743 children). These gains represent the first continued and sustainable population reduction in nearly a decade. The reduction of the foster care population can be attributed to several key factors: slowing of the entry rate and sustained performance in children exiting care.

Over the past three fiscal quarters, investigative case manager workload has dropped appreciably as the backlog has been eliminated (see Table 3). This coupled with the additional standardized process tools including supervisory administrative and case progress review checklists, as well as standardized safety discussions guides, have contributed to the reduced number of children entering the out-of-home care population.

Simultaneously, while the number of children entering the system has reduced, the number of children exiting care has sustained year-over-year performance. 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. Through these standard process activities, paired with the continued to use of cursory case reviews and Fostering Sustainable Connections (the Title IV-E Waiver demonstration project), the Department seeks to continue realizing safe and sustainable out-of-home care population reductions.

Table 2 – Benchmark Performance

		Q1FY17	Q2FY17	Q3FY17	Q4FY17	Q1FY18	Q2FY18	Q3FY18	Q4FY18
Backlog Cases									
	Benchmark (less than)	10,000	7,000	4,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	Actual	4,790	2,854	746					
Backlog Case by disposition									
	Investigation Phase	4,554	2,671	633					
	In-Home Cases	222	160	99					
	Out-of-Home Cases	14	23	14					
Number of Open Reports									
	Benchmark (less than)	---	---	---	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000
	Actual	13,477	9,611	6,586					
Number of Out-of-Home Children									
	Benchmark (less than)	---	---						17,500
	Benchmark (% reduction)			2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Actual	18,183	17,936	17,174					

Footnotes

- Number of open reports is the actual figure as of the Monday before the legislatively required reporting period based on the automated report run.
- Number of inactive cases is the actual figure as of the Monday before the legislatively required reporting period based on the automated report run.
- Out-of-home population figures are directly from the 20th of the Month Tigger which is a lagging 60 day metric.

Table 3 – Headcount and Caseload Performance

			March 31, 2016 Baseline			Quarter 2 FY 2017								Quarter 3 FY 2017							
			Workload			FTE		Workload						FTE		Workload					
Region	Section #	Section name	# of open reports (investigations)	# of In home cases	# of Out-of-Home Children	Investigators	Case managers	# of open reports (investigations)	# of In home cases	# of Out-of-Home Children	Investigation (reports per worker)	In Home (cases per worker)	Out of Home (children per worker)	Investigators	Case managers	# of open reports (investigations)	# of In home cases	# of Out-of-Home Children	Investigation (reports per worker)	In Home (cases per worker)	Out of Home (children per worker)
10 - Central	0, 1	Apache Junction/Kearney	576	0	601	12	12	393		621	32		51	14	14	366		652	27		48
	2	Casa Grande/Coolige	834	0	688	14	14	498		624	35		44	15	15	320		618	22		42
	3	Osborn	1005	0	542	17	17	650		607	39		36	14	14	359		546	26		39
	4	In Home	17	495	111		27	23	590	25	1	22	1		31	25	457	10	1	15	0
	5	Mesa	1423	0	615	16	16	457		593	29		38	15	15	174		570	12		38
	6	Gilbert	1236	0	824	16	16	327		715	20		44	20	20	299		641	15		32
	7	Tempe	1786	0	913	18	18	773		677	43		37	20	20	400		665	20		33
	8	South Mountain	1493	0	663	20	20	1081		841	55		43	17	17	413		744	24		43
	9	North Central	1522	0	775	11	11	524		525	46		46	13	13	263		528	20		39
	10	19th Avenue	2	0	1520		32	0		1408	0		44		38	0		1584	0		42
20-Pima	1	East Broadway	980	49	342	21	29	304	48	382	15	2	13	20	27	222	52	350	11	2	13
	2	Wetmore	227	27	398	11	21	164	38	412	15	2	20	11	21	201	29	444	19	1	21
	3	Country Club	132	18	370	12	23	90	27	472	8	1	21	11	21	83	24	439	8	1	21
	4	Wetmore	126	19	313	11	21	168	24	249	16	1	12	12	23	134	13	254	11	1	11
	5	Madera A	599	39	164	10	20	147	14	251	14	1	13	11	21	113	12	301	11	1	15
	6, 0	AHIT/Adoptions	7	0	555	1	1	2	0	471	3	0	357	2	3	15	0	376	9	0	114
	7	22nd/Alvernon	326	53	379	10	20	136	27	350	13	1	18	10	20	129	42	336	13	2	17
	9	Madera B	174	15	312	11	22	203	23	282	18	1	13	10	20	139	23	299	14	1	15
	10	Alvernon	82	0	340	12	23	40	0	294	3	0	13	10	20	50	0	246	5	0	13
30- Northern	1	Prescott/Prescott Valley	266	---	398	12	12	216	24	372	18	2	30	12	12	242	26	229	21	2	19
	2	St. Johns/Winslow/Show low	127	---	188	6	6	35	21	191	6	3	31	6	6	43	13	350	7	2	55
	3	Flagstaff/Page/Cottonwood/Fredonia	200	---	220	10	10	217	29	196	21	3	19	12	12	107	9	149	9	1	13
	4	Bullhead City/Lake Havasu	176	---	399	8	8	113	62	214	15	8	29	8	8	127	77	278	15	9	33
	5, 00	Kingman	198	---	132	11	11	93	13	372	8	1	34	10	10	71	6	327	7	1	32
40- Southeast	1	Benson, Douglas, Nogales, SV	254	30	245	7	13	37	12	211	5		16	5	9	18	9	196	4	1	21
	2	SV, Safford	645	34	169	3	11	146	33	182	54		17	7	13	123	35	194	19	3	15
	3	Globe, Payson	383	14	119	4	4	31	15	107	8		25	3	5	35	4	102	13	1	19
50- Southwest	0, 1	CHILDHELP Advocacy	483	0	4	35	0	111		2	3		0		0	3		0	0		0
	3	In Home	44	---	101		42	37	619	150	1	15	4		41	35	502	133	1	12	3
	4	Thunderbird	937	0	774	16	16	317		651	20		42	19	19	245		606	13		32
	5	Peoria	1999	0	839	18	18	472		678	27		38	19	19	300		651	16		34
	6	Glendale/Durango	1558	0	584	22	22	315		656	14		29	21	21	293		566	14		27
	7	Avondale/Advocacy	614	0	804	19	19	364		782	19		40	20	20	296		745	15		37
	8	Adoptions	0	0	1667		42	---		1684	0		40		21	0		1516	0		72
	9	Yuma, Parker, Summerton	347	0	418	16	16	182		449	11		28	16	16	153		442	9		27
	12	West 101	953	0	670	17	17	418		654	24		38	18	18	319		563	17		31
	13	Pinnacle Peak	597	0	713	15	15	285		532	19		35	15	15	219		458	15		31
9, 105 - Other	various	Various	370		48			242		54						252		66			
		Totals	22698	793	18917			9611	1619	17936						6586	1333	17174			

Footnotes

- FTE reporting for March 31,2016: The process of reporting FTE, in particular the specific section assignment of trainees, was not yet established in March 2016. As a result the FTE counts for that period are not available since they do not match the information on the total number of filled FTE positions as is required by the monthly hiring report
- Number of open reports is the actual figure as of the Monday before the legislatively required reporting period based on the automated report run.
- Number of inactive cases is the actual figure as of the Monday before the legislatively required reporting period based on the automated report run.
- Trainees are accounted for in FTE figures in each section with an equal distribution of 20% caseload.
- Out-of-home population figures are directly from the 20th of the Month Tigger which is a lagging 60 day metric.
- In Home cases are based on a handcount of cases activitly managed in each respective region. March values for Northern Region are not available given that the region counted the number of children and not the number of cases.
- In Home case figures were not handcounted in Soutwest Region in March 2016. The handcount only included total child count.
- In Home cases assignments differ regionally. Central and Southwest Regions employ specific in home units who manage in home cases only while Northen, Pima and Southeast Regions have mixed units that may carry in home or out of home cases.
- FTE assignments to investigations or case management are based on assignment of 50% investigative and 50% ongoing in Central, Northern and Southwest Regions. Pima and Southeast Regions employ a distribution of 34% Investigations and 66% ongoing.
- Section 6 Pima case load indicates high as all Pima adoption cases have been centralized to this unit and is transitioning from Vendor managed
- Southwest Region section 3 manages both in home cases and permanency planning units. The workload distribution is based on 1 unit of Permanency Planning workers and the remaining workers assigned to In Home