

Oregon Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Progress Report



This month in Child Welfare

November marked my start as the director of Child Welfare in the Oregon Department of Human Services. I already sense the great support and partnership being offered to Child Welfare. We have a wonderful opportunity to come together to transform Oregon's child welfare system through our coordinated and combined efforts.

I came to Oregon from Maryland where I oversaw child welfare and adult services in the state's department of Human Services. In Maryland, we created a robust collaboration and focus to keep children out of foster care and reduced the number of children in foster care by more than 50 percent. I'm looking forward to partnering with you to strengthen the child safety system in the ways that meet the unique needs of Oregon children and families, and with a focus on preventing entry into foster care.

Over the next few months, I'll be concentrating on:

- Learning Oregon's systems and the role of Child Welfare within the broader system.
- Transitioning initiatives from the Governor's Executive Order for Child Welfare into the program.
- Guiding strategic development of our plan for implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018.
- Preparing for the 2020 session of the Oregon State Legislature.
- Getting to know our Child Welfare workforce, Oregon Tribes, advisory groups and many other partners.



Our vision is for every child and family to have a safe and positive environment in which to live and develop. I look forward to working with you to achieve this vision.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW
Director, Oregon Child Welfare

November is National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month. Over the past year, Child Welfare sought adoptive parents for approximately 150 children.

For more than 30 years, Coos County Child Welfare adoption workers have offered classes for children starting the adoption process to create connections and foster understanding. The pre-adoption program recently expanded to Jackson and Josephine Counties.

The program demystifies adoption and connects children with community partners like judges who are involved in the adoption process. The children do creative projects, talk confidentially about their personal stories and get to know others having the same experience.

Amy Durbin from Coos County Child Welfare said the program can involve hard conversations but "all the messages are good. It's that they're loved, explaining why they've come into care, figuring out who their family is, and that there is always room for more love."



About the Oregon Child Welfare Progress Report

In March 2018, Governor Kate Brown requested a monthly progress report on Child Welfare. In April 2019, the Governor issued Executive Order No. 19-03 (<https://go.usa.gov/xVnH6>) which created a Child Welfare Oversight Board to assist her in making and implementing recommendations to improve Oregon's system for supporting safe children and thriving families. The report is published monthly and was revised in October 2019 to share progress in specific areas connected to the directives from the Governor and the Board.

For more information, contact the Child Welfare Director's Office at ChildWelfare.DirectorsOffice@state.or.us or (503) 945-6953.

Past Oregon Child Welfare Progress Reports are posted at www.oregon.gov/dhs.

See the annual Child Welfare Data Books (<https://go.usa.gov/xVnHU>).

Contents

About the Oregon Child Welfare Progress Report	2
Child Safety	4
Data	4
Open assessments	4
Recurrence of maltreatment.....	5
Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRT).....	5
Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH)	6
October accomplishments.....	9
November priorities	9
Foster Care.....	10
Data	10
DHS certified providers	10
Children and youth served in foster care.....	11
Reasons for child removal.....	11
Youth in foster care receiving treatment services outside Oregon	12
Children in foster care in temporary lodging.....	13
October accomplishments.....	14
November priorities	15
Child Welfare Workforce	16
Data	16
Rolling 12-month trend in Social Service Specialist (SSS1) 1 caseworker staffing	16
Staff hiring.....	16
October accomplishments.....	19
November priorities	19
Operational Support.....	20
Data	20
October accomplishments.....	21
November priorities	21

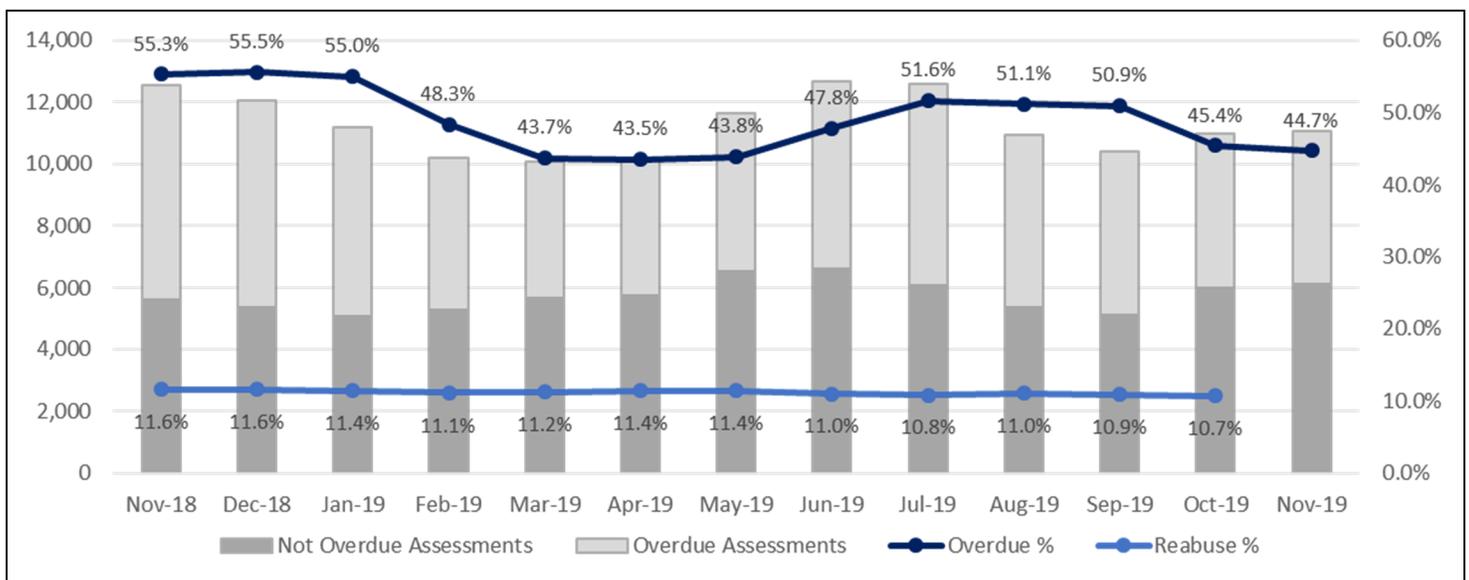
Child Safety

Child Welfare receives reports of potential child abuse, assesses situations and prepares safety plans to assist children and families, working closely with law enforcement and other community partners. In some cases, a safety plan is put in place, which enables a child to stay at home with the family. When child safety can't be ensured in the home, an out-of-home safety plan is developed where DHS considers relative placement as its first option, followed by foster care.

Data

Open assessments

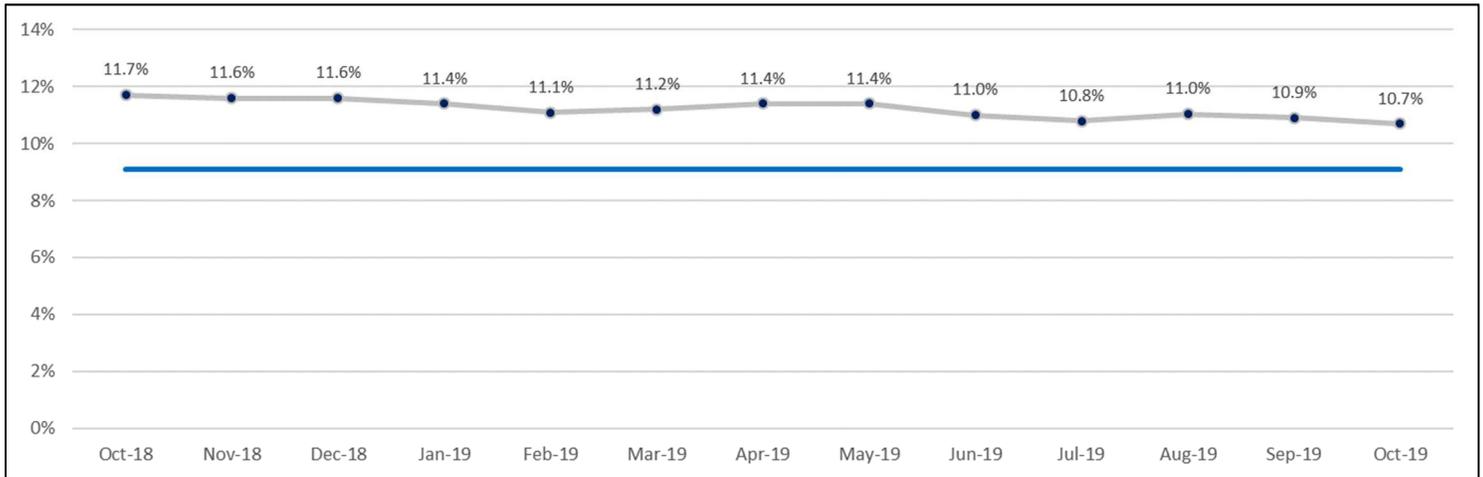
Child Protective Services (CPS) assessments describe our response to a report of child abuse and if needed, the level of intervention necessary for children to be safe. With the high caseloads workers carry, situations with present or impending danger take priority, resulting in a backlog of overdue assessments. Child Welfare is implementing two plans simultaneously: One to reduce the backlog of overdue assessments and a second sustainability plan for timely completion of new assessments to prevent future backlogs.



Data as of November 6, 2019

Recurrence of maltreatment

Maltreatment includes the different types of physical or emotional ill treatment that can result in actual or potential harm to a child. Each type of maltreatment experienced by a victim in a founded child abuse referral counts as an incident of child abuse or neglect. Victims may have suffered more than one type of maltreatment or may have been involved in more than one founded referral. Re-abuse rates are defined federally to reflect the recurrence of maltreatment. This chart reflects the percentage of children who were victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within 12 months of their initial report. The federal target is 9.1%.

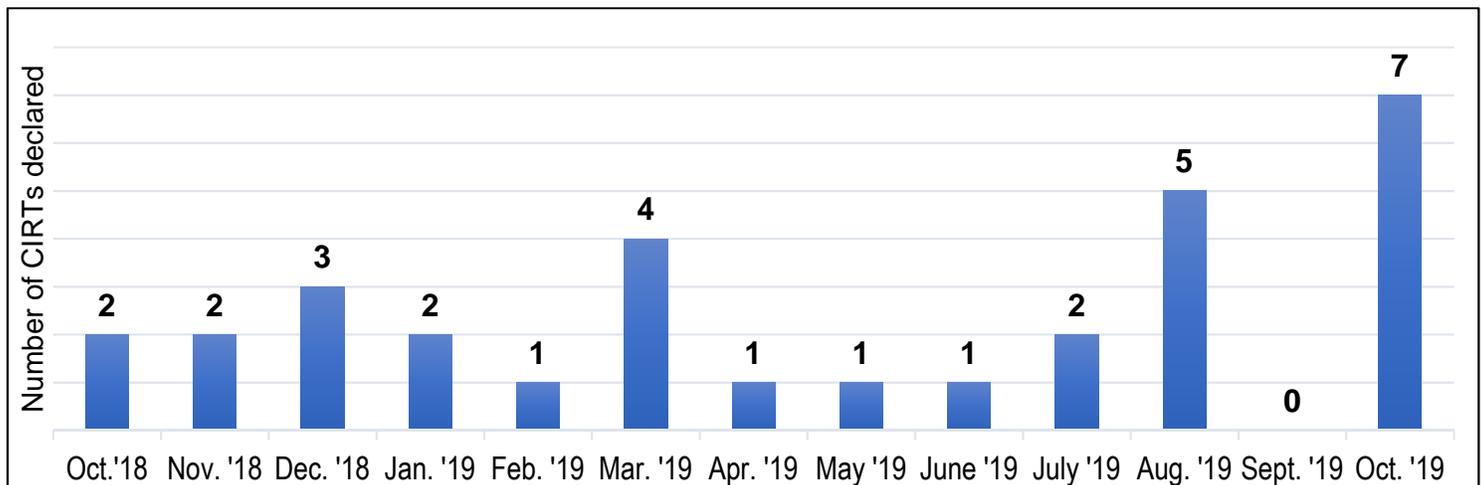


Critical Incident Review Teams (CIRT)

Critical Incident Review Teams (CIRT) are formed to investigate child fatalities when the victim, their siblings or other children living in the household have had previous interactions with Child Welfare within 12 months of the fatality. CIRTs focus on identifying systemic issues contributing to a child fatality and how they can be corrected or minimized to prevent future fatalities.

In the future, the Child Welfare Progress Report will also track the timeliness of CIRT declarations and the timeliness of the CIRT reports being posted to the website. Given the changes in the CIRT review and reporting timeline as a result of Senate Bill 832, which took effect on October 1, 2019, consistent data will not be available until December 2019.

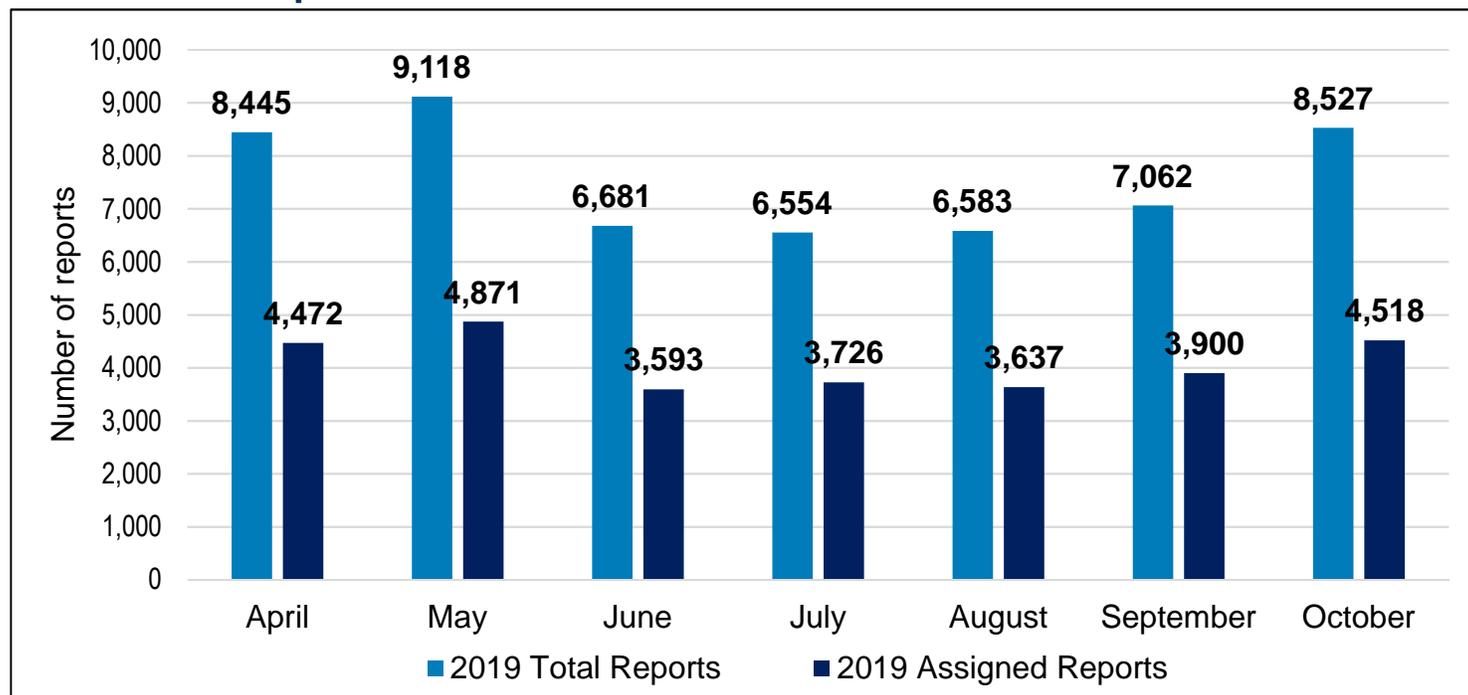
Monthly CIRT Declarations



Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH)

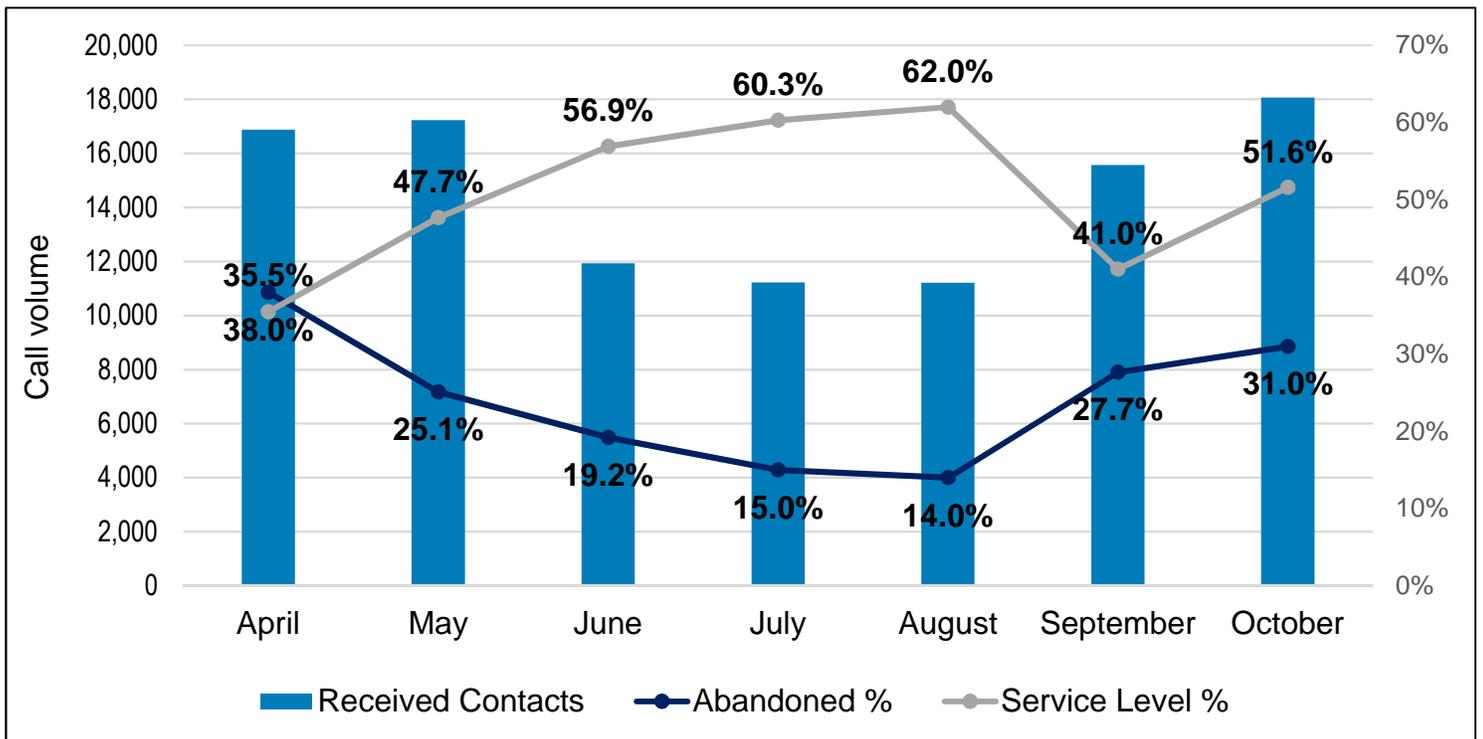
Over the past year, 15 regional child abuse reporting hotlines were centralized into a single hotline called the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) to improve safety, consistency and customer service. By consolidating 15 regional hotlines into one and streamlining screening processes, Child Protective Services (CPS) workers are better able to meet the complex needs of the diverse communities that make up our state. As part of this streamlining plan, all screening staff are being trained in the same interpretation of rule and Child Welfare policies and procedures. This ensures that all children and families are served and evaluated in a consistent way and treated fairly within the system.

ORCAH total reports



ORCAH service level

Service level measures the percentage of calls that were answered within a certain timeframe. In October, the service level timeframe was four minutes.



ORCAH average wait times

Average wait time measures the wait times for all categories of callers. ORCAH continues hiring and training screeners, and improving business processes, which will assist in reducing wait times.

Average wait times for October 2019



Definitions: LEA: Law enforcement agency; MR: MR: Mandatory reporter; GP: General public; Spanish: Spanish language line

Maximum wait times for October 2019



Definitions: LEA: Law enforcement agency; MR: MR: Mandatory reporter; GP: General public; Spanish: Spanish language line

October accomplishments

- Critical Incident Review Teams (CIRT) are formed when there is a fatality of a child known to DHS. CIRTs identify when systemic issues may present barriers to adequate Child Welfare service delivery or child safety decision making. Senate Bill (SB) 832 passed in 2019 brings substantial changes to CIRTs. The first public report in the new format required through the bill was posted online at www.oregon.gov/dhs.
- The proposal to establish a Child Fatality Review and Prevention Program was presented to the Governor's Child Welfare Executive Oversight Board. The proposal involves creating a new program to encompass both CIRTs and child fatality prevention efforts. It recommends locating the program outside of the Child Protective Services (CPS) program, where CIRT processes are currently managed, to allow for greater objectivity and to build capacity to improve prevention efforts identified by CIRTs.
- The statewide initiative to reduce the number of overdue Child Protective Services assessments continues. There were 4,782 overdue assessments statewide on October 5, 2019 and 4,873 by November 5, 2019. Overdue assessments increased 1.9% over September. The primary contributing factor to the change was an increase of assigned reports by over 600 in October. Several local offices had significant decreases in overdue assessments with five operating without any overdue assessments.

November priorities

- Child Welfare continues receiving technical assistance on CIRTs from Dr. Michael Cull, policy fellow, and Tiffany Lindsay, policy analyst, from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago on safety culture and the Safe Systems Improvement Tool (SSIT). Ms. Lindsey will conduct debriefs with staff recently participating in a CIRT. The interviews are the first step in understanding staff's perspective on the work done with families prior to a child fatality. The team also continues implementing the SSIT which is an innovative tool to measure pressures existing in the organization and to prioritize system improvement opportunities. The SSIT offers professional learning at the individual case level and provides the ability to utilize aggregate data to support improvement and evaluate change over time.
- A statewide CPS assessment fidelity review team has been established to promote continuous quality improvement in our practice and improve outcomes for children and families by conducting a review of completed CPS assessments. The team includes 80 existing staff from around the state split into 40 review teams. The teams will review a statewide sample of 200 cases initiated and completed between March and August 31, 2019 to identify improvement opportunities.

October highlight

A lack of affordable housing is at crisis levels in parts of Oregon. In 2018, unsafe or inadequate housing was a factor for nearly 20 percent of the children who entered foster care.

One example of a successful, preventative partnership that's served to keep hundreds of children out of the foster care system is the Maslow Project in the Rogue Valley.

The Maslow Project recently moved families into 12 new, permanent supportive housing units through a partnership with DHS and the Housing Authority of Jackson County. Next spring, Maslow plans to open additional units in Central Point.

Maslow has case managers that provide in-depth support to the families they serve and to help them develop and achieve goals.



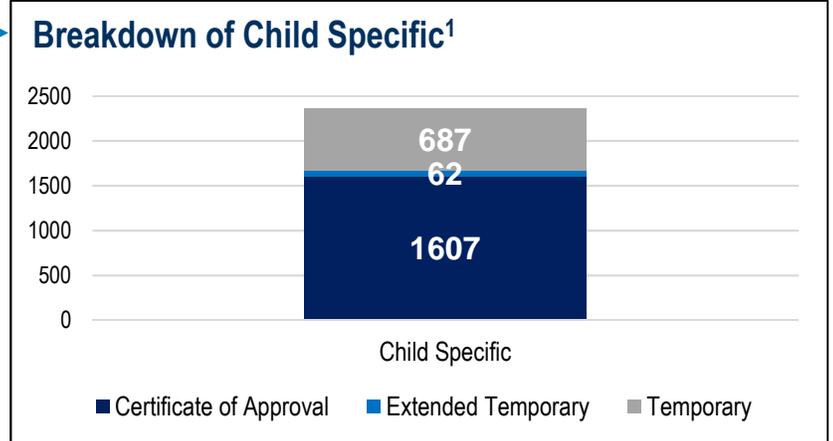
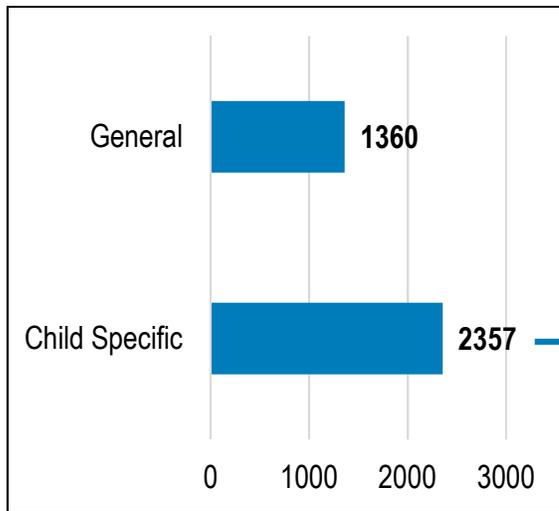
Foster Care

Foster Care efforts are focused in three primary categories: Safely reducing the number of children who enter the foster care system; safely reducing the length of stay in the foster care system and increasing foster system capacity to match the unique needs of every child with a safe, stable and caring foster home in their community.

Data

DHS certified providers

Having more foster homes available will help ensure an appropriate first-time placement for each child that meets the child's unique needs. The chart displays DHS certified providers by type and certification duration on November 5, 2019.



¹Breakdown of child-specific does not add up to 2,377 since there was one provider with a different approval type.

Definitions

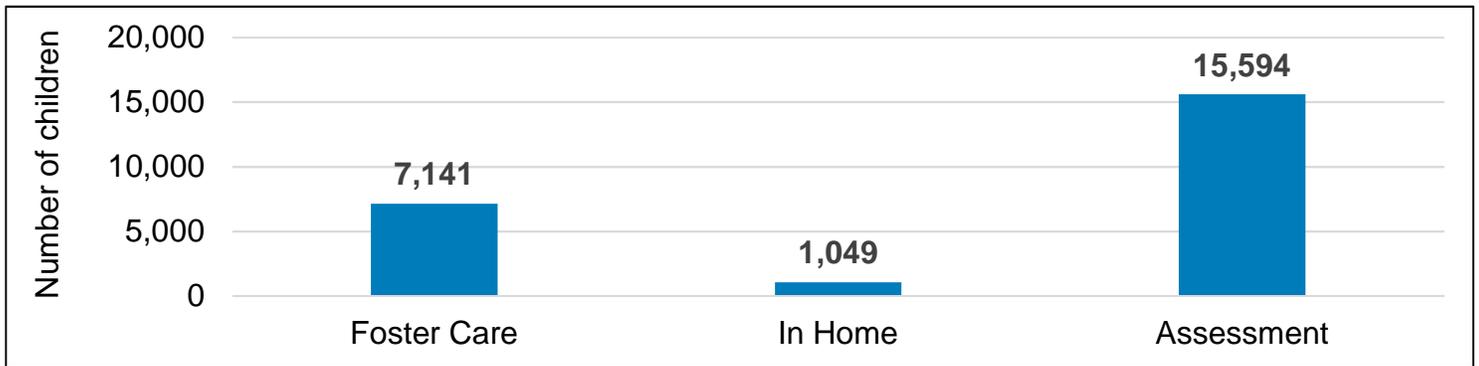
Certificate of Approval: A document DHS issues to a certified family to approve the operation of a home to provide care for a child or young adult in the care or custody of DHS and for whom DHS determines a placement is needed.

Temporary Certificate of Approval: A document DHS issues to a certified family to approve the operation of a home to provide care for a specific child or young adult in the care and custody of DHS. The Temporary Certificate of Approval is valid for up to 180 days unless an extension is granted under OAR 413-200- 0276(3).

Extended Temporary: Temporary Certificate of Approval authorized for an extension beyond 180 days.

Children and youth served in foster care

The chart displays data as of November 5, 2019.



Definitions

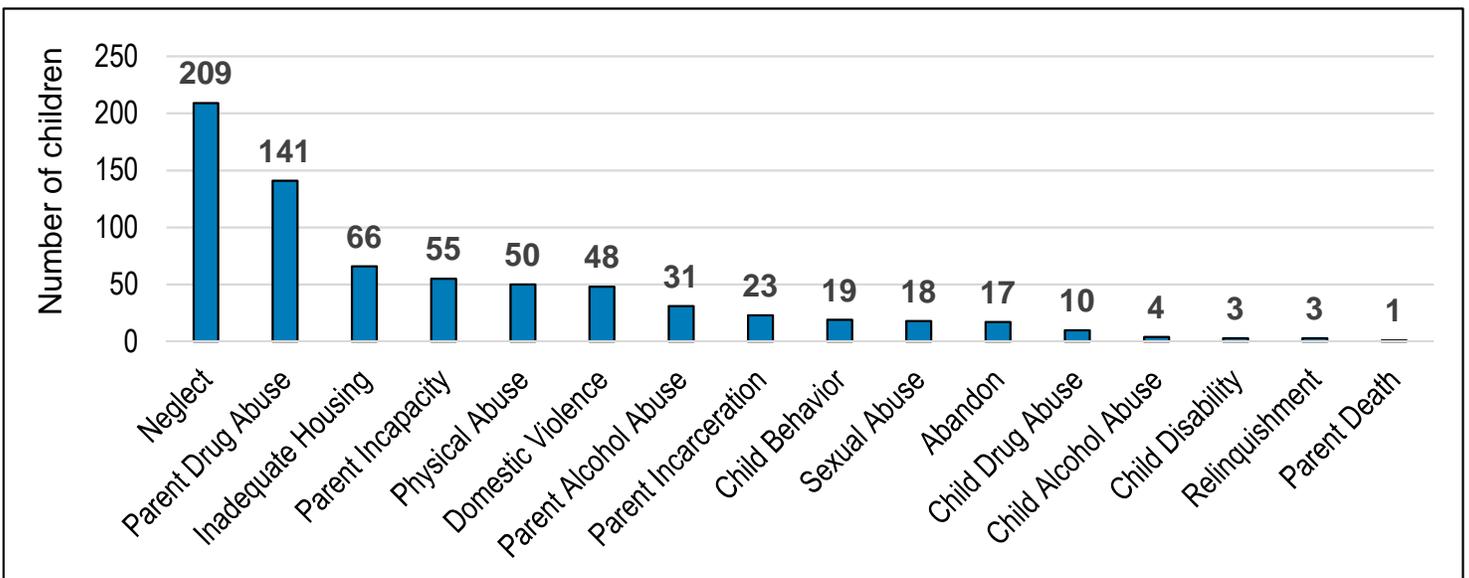
Foster Care: A child is in foster care if they have a Foster Care Placement open of any type including residential facility/proctor home, family foster care (relative or not), detention, runaway, hospital, trial reunification, independent living, etc.

In-home: A child is a “child served in home” if they have a CPS Case Type, with an Open Protective Action, Initial Safety Plan or Ongoing Safety Plan, and the child is not in Foster Care, or on adoption or guardianship services, or on an FSS Case Type once the FSS Assessment is approved.

Children on Open Assessment: A count of alleged victims on open Child Protective Services (CPS) assessments.

Reasons for child removal

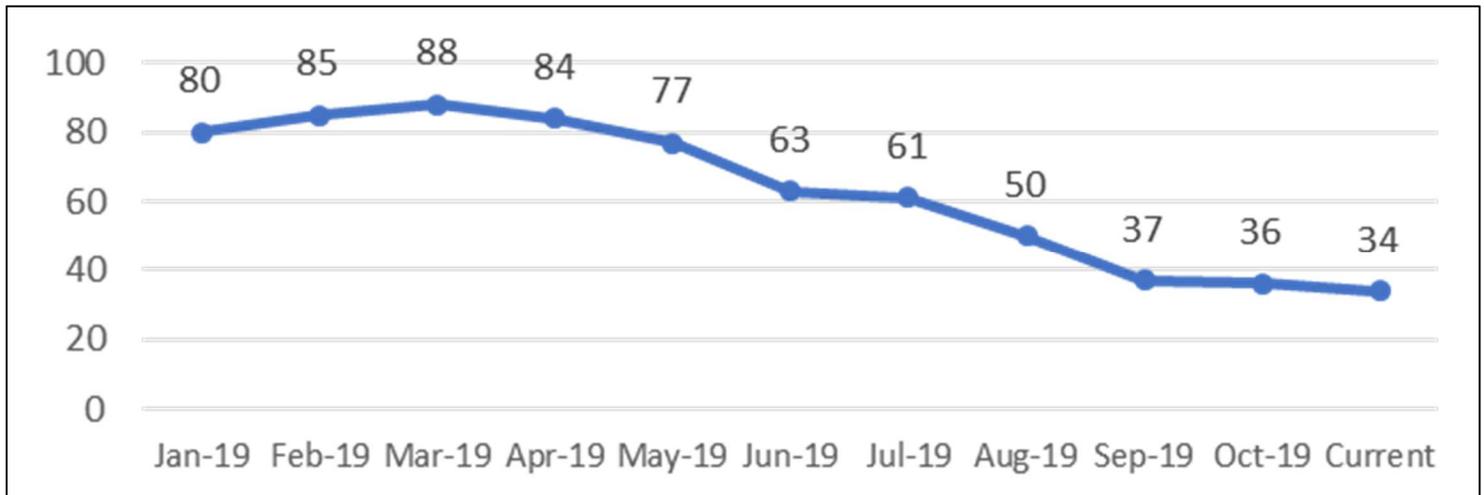
Data reflects the reasons for removing children in October. A child may have more than one reason for removal.



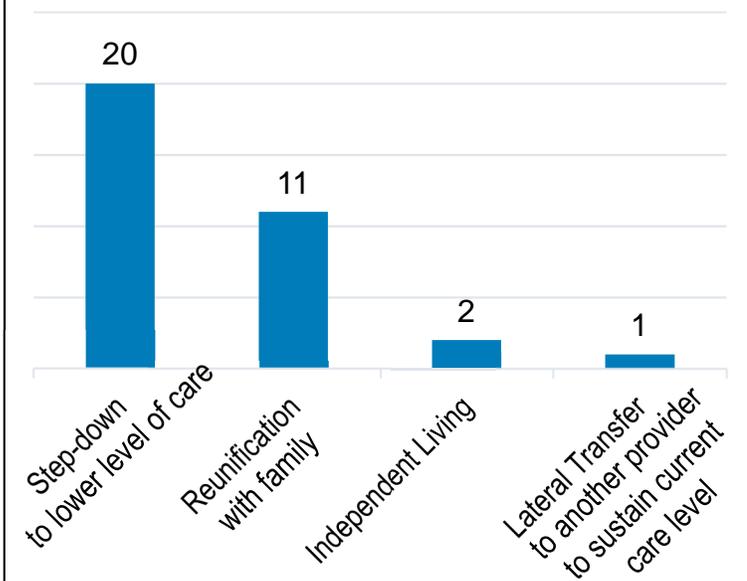
Youth in foster care receiving treatment services outside Oregon

Oregon lacks capacity in residential treatment programs to serve all children and youth with complex or specialized needs and as a result, DHS sometimes places youth in foster care in treatment programs outside of Oregon. DHS is working with the Governor's Child Welfare Oversight Board, the Oregon Health Authority and other partners to expand capacity to serve children and youth in Oregon.

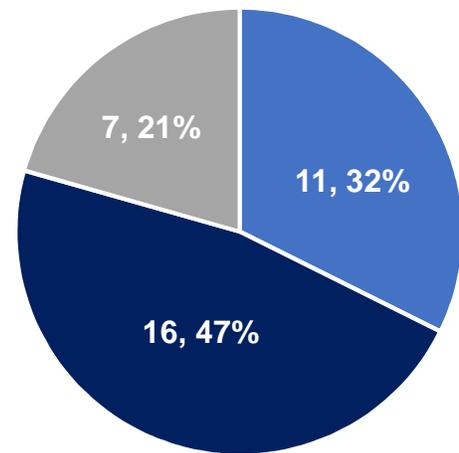
Total youth in foster care served outside Oregon



Plan for returning youth in out-of-state placements to complete treatment plans



Timeline for completing treatment



■ 6 - 12 Months ■ 90 Days to 6 Months ■ > 90 Days

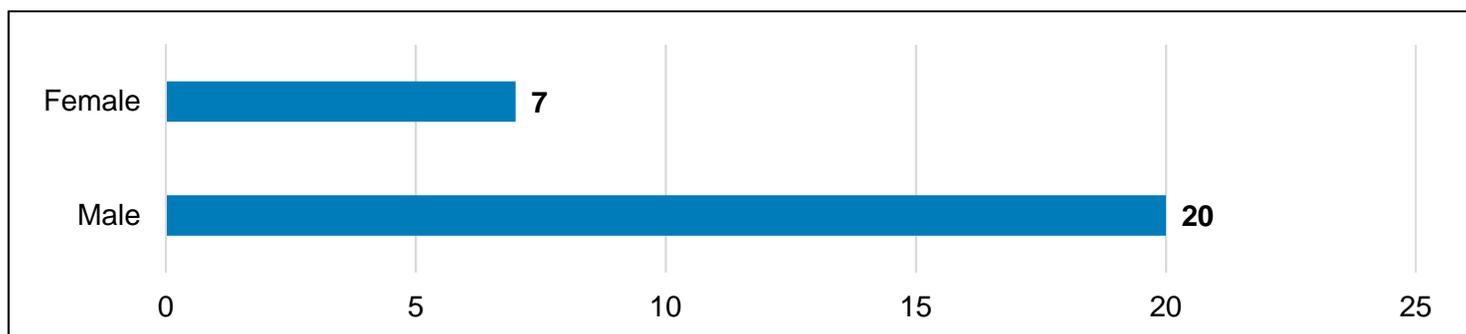
Children and youth in foster care in temporary lodging

All children and youth in the custody of Child Welfare should be served in appropriate placements that meet their needs. When efforts to find an immediate placement are exhausted, a child or youth may experience temporary lodging. Temporary lodging involves a child or youth being housed in a hotel with Child Welfare staff while an appropriate placement is developed. Children and youth in temporary lodging have access to school and appropriate daytime activities. Oregon currently lacks the type of services or capacity among existing providers to meet the needs of all children and youth in its care in an appropriate placement. Child Welfare continues working to decrease the use of temporary lodging.

Children and youth in temporary lodging in October 2019

Total served in the month	Average age served in the month	Average daily population for the month
27	12.62	7.16

Children and youth in temporary lodging for October 2019, by gender



Children and youth placed in temporary lodging in October 2019, by night spent

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 7	2 9	3 8	4 7	5 6
6 7	7 8	8 8	9 8	10 10	11 7	12 7
13 7	14 8	15 5	16 7	17 5	18 4	19 5
20 6	21 9	22 7	23 6	24 7	25 7	26 7
27 7	28 8	29 7	30 7	31 11		

October accomplishments

- Treatment Services and Office of Training, Investigations and Safety staff conducted program reviews and unannounced visits at five of the nine programs where foster youth are in residential treatment facilities outside of Oregon. As of October 31, 2019, there were 34 Oregon youth in out-of-state residential treatment, down from a high of 88 in March 2019. In October, three youth returned to Oregon.
- Three temporary certification staff were hired and started work with the Mobile Foster Family Certification Unit to reduce the backlog in pending foster parent applicants. The team consists of three full-time certifiers, two full-time trainers, and three part-time temporary certifiers.
- Child Welfare received funding in its 2019-21 budget to expand the KEEP program statewide. KEEP is a foster parent support and training program designed to stabilize placements of youth in foster homes. It was developed by the Oregon Social Learning Center. The program involves 16 weekly sessions and two tracks: one for families caring for children ages 4 to 12 and one for children 12 and older. There are three in-person groups going and two Tele-KEEP virtual groups in Eastern Oregon serving a total of 25 families. Child Welfare staff provided presentations and training for local staff and foster parent recruiters for two contracted providers.
- DHS hosted a large meeting with cross-systems partners to launch the next phase of workgroups to decrease temporary lodging of children and youth in foster care. The workgroups are for: Settlement agreement compliance; care capacity and Office of Child Welfare Programs involvement; Child Welfare field engagement; interagency partnerships; daily operations, and data-informed decisions. Child Welfare and the Office of Developmental Disabilities drafted a protocol to improve response times for children and youth eligible for intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) services. The protocol aims to shorten the length of stay in temporary lodging and decrease the risk of entering temporary lodging for children and youth with I/DD.

October highlight

Rapid access to physical, dental and mental health services is critical for youth being served in Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) residential treatment programs.

Earlier this year, youth in BRS residential treatment programs got the flexibility to change their Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO) based on their geographic placement. A second initiative aims to integrate mental health services in BRS residential treatment programs through a combination of Medicaid and non-Medicaid funding.

The Facilitate Rapid Access Project (FRAP) targets timelines for mental health assessment and evaluation, timely qualification, and immersion into therapy through contract optimization.

The project also steps toward a whole-person integrated care model by assuring holistic case consulting and cross-training between mental health professionals and BRS staff to assure complementary integration and interventions.



November priorities

- This month the Mobile Foster Family Certification Team is studying 14 families. Those studies should be done within 6 weeks if there aren't unforeseen issues. Our two trainers are providing the full Foundations curriculum through a power weekend model in both Ontario and La Grande.
- Child Welfare continues supporting the expansion of KEEP with two additional groups forming this month. Recruitment has begun for a group in Lane County to start before year's end. Preparation is underway to implement KEEP in the following areas in early 2020: Child Welfare District 10 serving Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson Counties; District 3 serving Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties; District 4 serving Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties; District 6 serving Douglas County, and District 8 serving Jackson and Josephine Counties.
- The Foster Care Program is completing the hiring process for a foster parent retention and recruitment manager, aiming to have the position filled in December. The program also opened recruitment for the second wave of foster family retention and recruitment champions. The positions will be located throughout the state and have three focus areas: Retention of foster families by identifying services, resources and trainings that can support their efforts; recruitment of families to meet the characteristic needs of children entering care, taking into careful consideration the importance of cultural connections and familial ties; and, community engagement.
- Child Welfare is moving temporary lodging workgroups into a formal project structure with enhanced governance. Workgroups are finalizing strategic planning and launching project plans. An updated protocol for approval of temporary lodging protocols has been disseminated and feedback is being gathered.

Child Welfare Workforce

With investments from the Oregon State Legislature, Child Welfare is hiring new positions to reduce caseloads to more manageable levels in line with national averages and at the same time, working to reduce staff turnover.

Data

Rolling 12-month trend in Social Service Specialist (SSS1) 1 caseworker staffing

This is a monthly picture of the SSS1 workforce, which includes every type of caseworker position. It shows a rolling 12-month trend. In February and March, the agency was unable to recruit new caseworkers due to the implementation of a new personnel data management system (Workday). The table reflects the most recent data available.

	2018			2019									12-Mo AVG
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN ¹	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	
Total # of New SSS1 Caseworkers	37	25	28	59	30	32	31	9	13	23	25	32	28.7
Total # of SSS1 Caseworker Separations	16	12	21	14	7	7	20	16	15	13	25	20	15.5
Impact on Total Caseworkers	21	13	7	45	23	25	11	(7)	(2)	10	0	12	13.2
Total # of SSS1 Caseworker Promotions	11	6	7	20	8	10	10	2	1	1	4	9	7.4

¹New SSS1 caseworkers: Hired or promoted into SSS1 position from inside or outside of DHS.

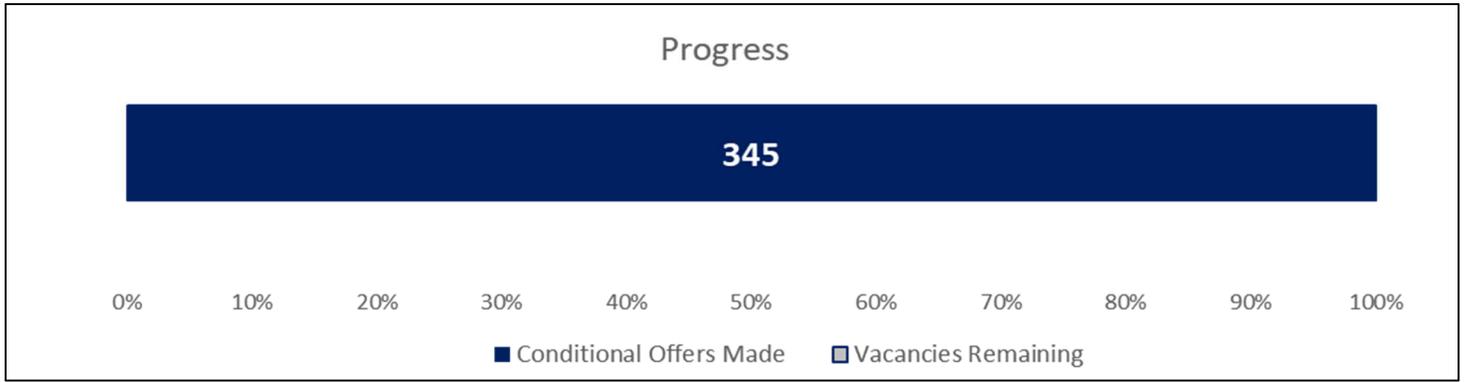
Staff hiring

During its 2019 session, the Oregon State Legislature authorized Child Welfare to hire more than 300 new staff members to improve safety and build capacity within the workforce. DHS announced recruitments in late July 2019 for a variety of positions.

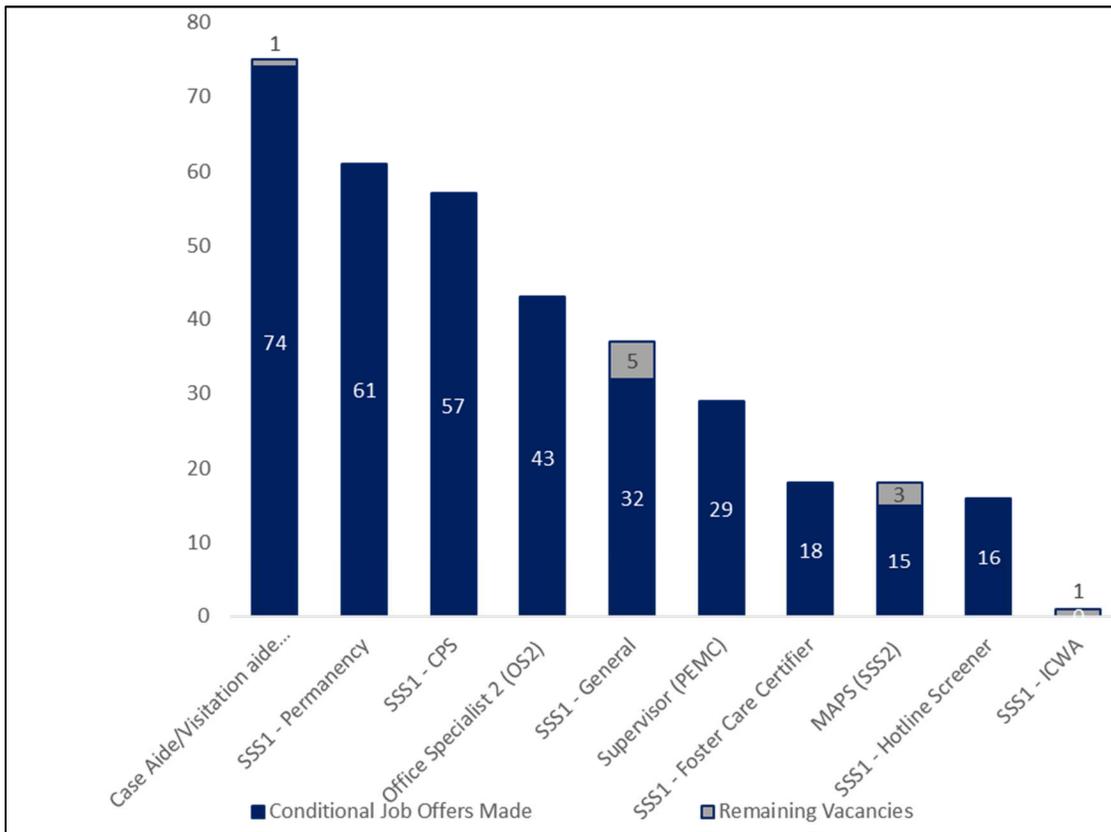
Staff hiring statewide

These tables depict statewide and district-by-district summaries of position hiring by job classification, and the stage at which all applicants are in in the hiring process. It also shows the number of remaining vacancies left to fill and progress to completion by job classification. The tables reflect data as of November 7, 2019.

Staff hiring progress



Staff hiring by position



Staff hiring by Child Welfare District

District	Vacancies	Active applications	Referred to Vidcruit	Conditional job offers made	Remaining vacancies	% Complete
District 1: Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook	6	94	88	9	0	150%
District 2: Multnomah	34	918	645	49	0	144%
District 3: Marion, Polk and Yamhill	39	557	427	33	6	85%
District 4: Benton, Lincoln and Linn	10	258	157	14	0	140%
District 5: Lane	17	357	274	32	0	188%
District 6: Douglas	40	345	272	40	0	100%
District 7: Coos and Curry	12	135	98	14	0	117%
District 8: Jackson and Josephine	41	168	152	32	9	78%
District 9: Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco and Wheeler	4	72	61	2	2	50%
District 10: Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson	17	364	280	27	0	159%
District 11: Klamath and Lake	8	120	93	8	0	100%
District 12: Morrow and Umatilla	5	118	66	8	0	160%
District 13: Baker, Union and Wallowa	3	56	15	2	1	67%
District 14: Grant, Harney and Malheur	25	303	219	26	0	104%
District 15: Clackamas	7	321	154	7	0	100%
District 16: Washington	26	237	201	20	6	77%
ORCAH	19	540	356	22	0	116%
Total	313	4963	3558	345	24	110%

October accomplishments

- Hired 345 positions by the end of October in the surge hire including 176 new caseworkers.
- Closed all Child Welfare surge recruitments, surpassing the goal of hiring over 80% of the new positions by mid-October.
- Achieved hiring diversity goal of over 25% hiring rate of underrepresented groups.
- Increased Essential (CORE) Training capacities through December for new caseworkers hires to ensure wait times for training were minimized.
- Conducted the first of the enhanced supervisor trainings for new supervisors focusing on clinical supervision, leadership and culture change.
- Worked with managers to refine the video interview process (VidCruiter) and applicant invitations to increase candidate video interview completion rates.

November priorities

- Onboarding new Training and Workforce Manager to focus on training and retention of workers.
- Closing down surge hire activities and transferring recruitment practices into a new accelerated hiring process which will become standard practice. Establishing and communicating these new processes for managers to recruit and fill vacancies.
- Opening new recruitments to establish applicant pools for Child Welfare districts and branches with high attrition rates.

October highlight

One of the goals for the Oregon Department of Human Services is to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities where we do our work through our local offices.

When the Oregon State Legislature awarded Child Welfare more than 300 new positions earlier this year, a rapid recruitment process known as a “surge hire” was put in place. The surge hire included a goal for 25% of the new hires to be from underrepresented communities.

The goal was met through 25% of new hires disclosing their race in the application process. The racial breakdown of new hires from underrepresented communities included:

- 5% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 10% Asian
- 19% Black or African American
- 36% Hispanic or Latino
- 30% Two or more races



Half of the new hires reported their race as white. Racial status is unknown for the final 25% of new hires who did not disclose the information.

Operational Support

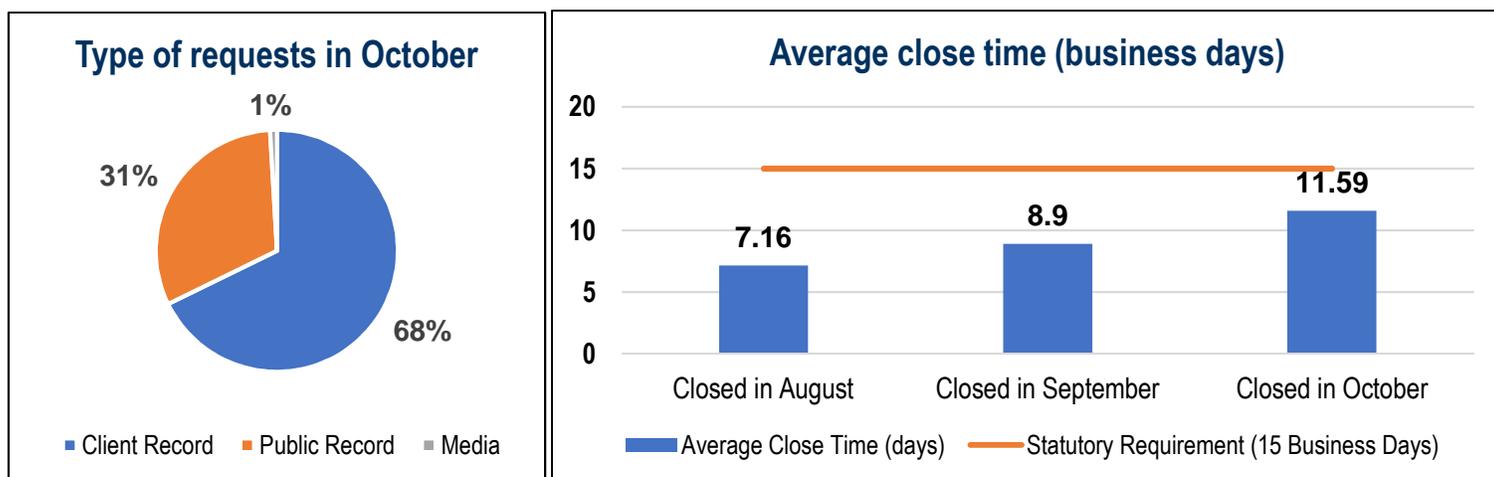
The Governor's Executive Order No. 19-03 included direction to address operational challenges, including compliance with public records law and ensuring accurate and timely data is available to improve operations, processes and decision-making.

Data

Public records request processing

DHS created a centralized Public Records Unit in June 2019 to respond to public records requests, track policy compliance and report outcomes. The charts reflect the types of public records requests received in the Public Records Unit and the average time to close the requests. The charts reflect records requests for Aging and People with Disabilities and Child Welfare program divisions, and media requests. In October, 679 requests were received, 722 requests were completed and the median processing time was 12 days.

In compliance with statute, we acknowledge requests within five business days and make every effort to complete requests within 15 business days. On the rare occasion that we are unable to complete a request within 15 business days, we send a notice regarding why we need more time and providing a new estimate of when we will complete the request. Instances where we would request additional time include: DHS needing more information; the staff needed to finish the request are unavailable or the number of other requests being worked by DHS makes the deadline unrealistic.



October accomplishments

- When the centralized Public Records Unit was formed, it started by processing Child Welfare client records requests in July 2019 and absorbed media records requests in August. In September, it absorbed records requests from Aging and People with Disabilities. During September and October, four more staff were added to bring the total FTE staff for the unit to 15. The majority of orientation and training for the four newest hires happened in October. Existing staff provide training for new staff which caused a slowdown in processing times, however, the pace was returning to normal by month's end. The October median processing time was 12 days. All unit staff also participated in a training from the Oregon Department of Justice to strengthen its understanding of the complicated analysis required to process Child Welfare records requests.
- The DHS Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation (ORRAI) identified Child Welfare districts for initial implementation of the Safety at Reunification Tool. The initial implementation will work with three districts, incorporating five counties across the state. Conducted RiSE trainings including five supervisor quarterly trainings and the preservice training for incoming supervisors. Completed the research phase of the Children's Public Private Partnership (CP3) to identify barriers to permanency for children with the greatest probability of successful reunification with family. Completion of wave six for the Child Welfare Staff Engagement Survey. This survey is intended to identify when and why staff become disengaged with the agency and to identify tangible strategies to support staff for improved retention.

November priorities

- The Public Records Unit absorbs records requests from all remaining parts of the department in November. This will include processing records for the Office of Developmental Disabilities, Self-Sufficiency Programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Central and Shared Services.
- ORRAI continues to support planning and next steps with the Marion County Family Preservation Collaborative for developing resources and services for children and families identified by the Children's Public Private Partnership (CP3) efforts. Foster community awareness of where services and supports should be prioritized through the use of geospatial mapping. Maps will provide visualization of where children and families are located with probability estimates of both screening scores and reunification scores. Completion of the research phase for a new tool, Safety at CPS. CPS is Child Protective Services. This research will establish an algorithm to estimate the probability of a subsequent founded referral should a child(ren) remain in home. Research complete to determine if children can be identified via a algorithm for being at risk for Temporary Lodging or out-of-state placement.