

# Oregon Department of Human Services

## Child Welfare Progress Report



## This month in Child Welfare: Building supports for foster families

This month I am proud to share more about our efforts to increase foster family retention and support. Our new Statewide Foster Family Retention/Recruitment Manager, Billy Cordero, is bringing on 15 Foster Family Retention and Recruitment Champions across the state. Three Champions have been hired and trained, with the final 12 starting by May.

Champions will engage in their communities and connect families to supportive resources. One of these resources is the KEEP program, an evidence-based program for foster families to learn tailored behavior techniques for children in their care. This helps the children and the families have better outcomes. KEEP has now rolled out in multiple counties, and a new tele-KEEP program has received praise for its ability to serve rural families who aren't able to attend in-person meetings.

Our vision is that Oregon will have an abundance of safe, supported, diverse, and thriving quality foster families that reflect the characteristics of children in care. In order to do that, we know foster families need connections to ongoing training, support, and appreciation for the work they are doing every day to prepare these children for success.



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

## Reaching out to foster families who serve children with a higher level of need

Foster Plus Collaborative is an effort of 11 social service agencies collaborating to connect kids in need with the support and stability of committed, caring foster families. These families provide care at a Behavioral Residential Services (BRS) level, an area that has been identified and prioritized to increase statewide capacity for children with higher behavior needs in a family-like setting.

Due to the higher level of care needed for children in this type of placement, additional supports for Foster Plus families include monthly respite (2 days per month), 24-hour crisis support, increased home visits from the certifying program, additional training, and an excellent level of customer service.

Last year, Foster Plus launched a Therapeutic Foster Care Campaign to reach and engage potential foster parents across Oregon (in counties serviced by Foster Plus agencies) and encourage them to sign up for more information on the Foster Plus website

From December 10, 2019 through January 29, 2020, social media campaigns to raise awareness and generate interest in fostering at a BRS level of care have generated 280 leads, and social media advertising is performing well above industry standards.

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# 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 January 2020 to share progress in specific areas connected to the directives from the Governor.

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

Past Oregon Child Welfare Progress Reports are posted at [www.oregon.gov/dhs](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs).

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

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# Child Safety

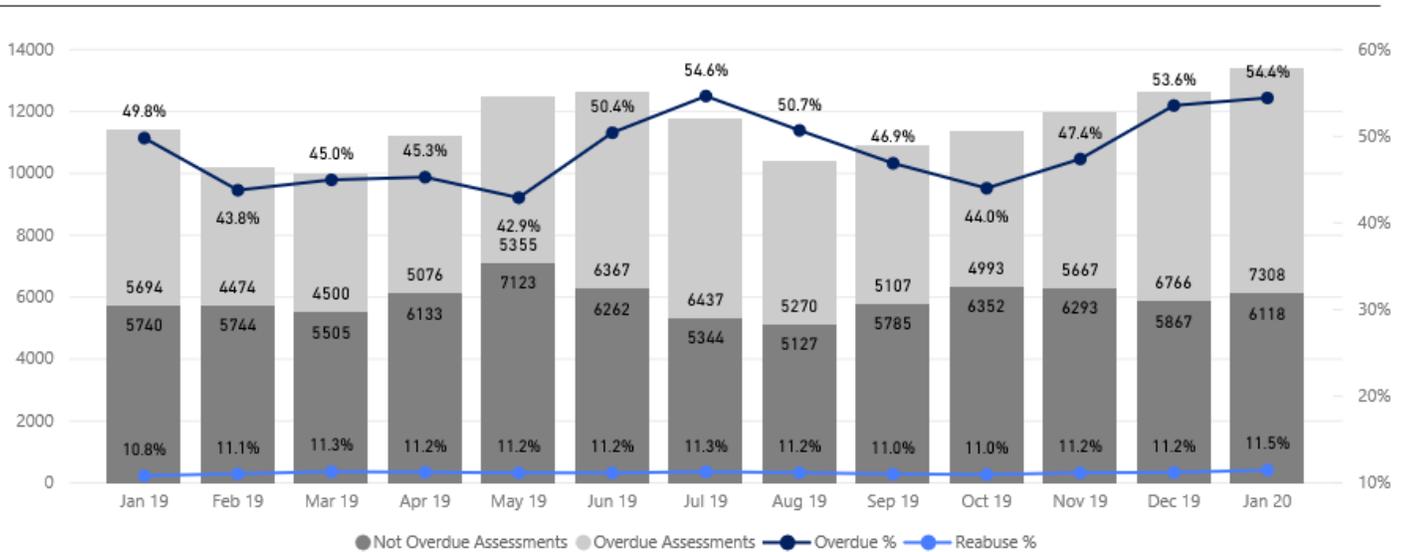
Child Welfare receives reports of potential child abuse, assesses situations and prepares safety plans to assist children and families, working closely with law enforcement and other community partners. In some cases, a safety plan is put in place, which enables a child to stay at home with the family. 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.

## Open Assessments and Recurrence of Maltreatment

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. This chart reflects the percentage of children who were victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation (recurrence of maltreatment, or listed on this chart as “re-abuse”) within 12 months of their initial report. The federal target is 9.1 percent.

Data from February 13, 2020

### Historical Overdue Assessments:



Note: Historical % of Overdue Assessments are based off Point-in-Time data

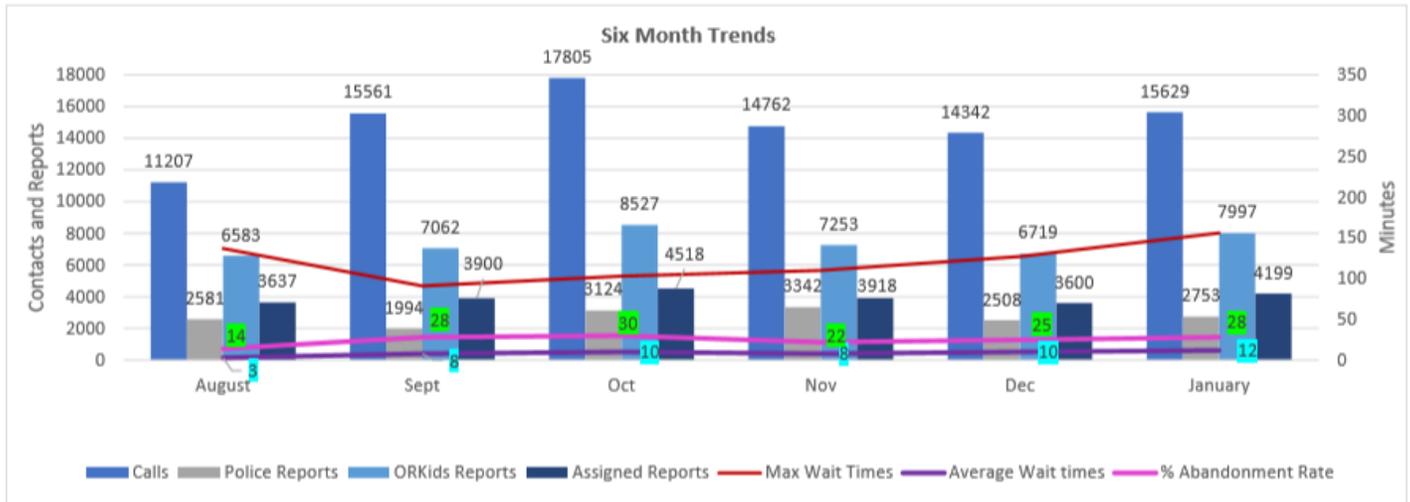
## Critical Incident Review Teams (CIRTs)

Critical Incident Review Teams (CIRTs) 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. The new Child Fatality Review and Prevention program is in the process of hiring two new coordinator positions and will report to the Child Welfare Director. In January, CIRTs were gathered for 6 cases.

# Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH)

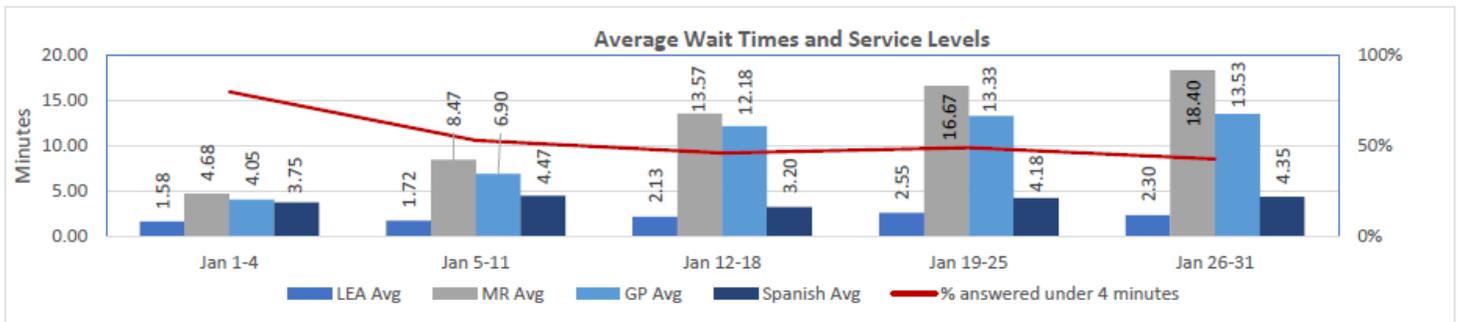
Over 2019, 15 regional child abuse reporting hotlines were centralized into a single hotline called the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) to improve safety, consistency and customer service. By consolidating 15 regional hotlines into one and streamlining screening processes, Child Protective Services (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.

## ORCAH total reports



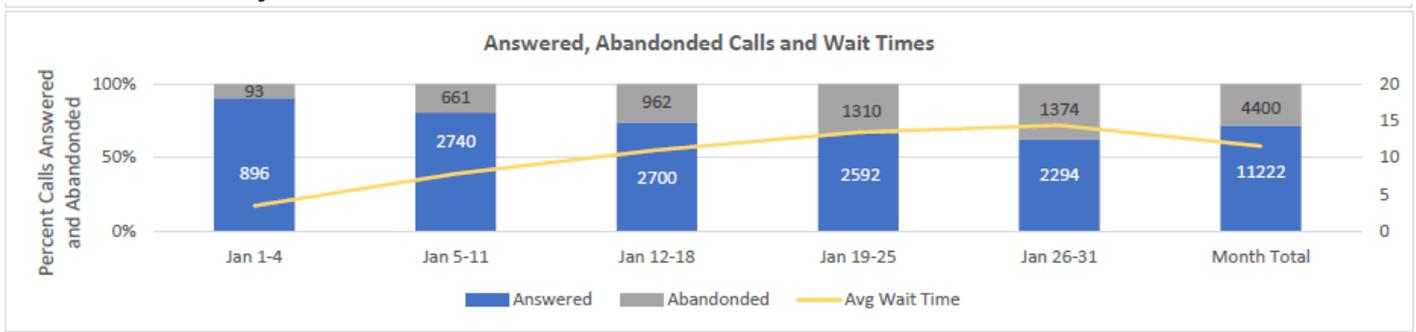
## ORCAH average wait times

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. In January, the service level goal was to answer within four minutes.



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

## Call Data for January 2020



Contacts=Calls and Emails ORCAH received

OR-Kids Reports=Calls and Emails that resulted in a documented report

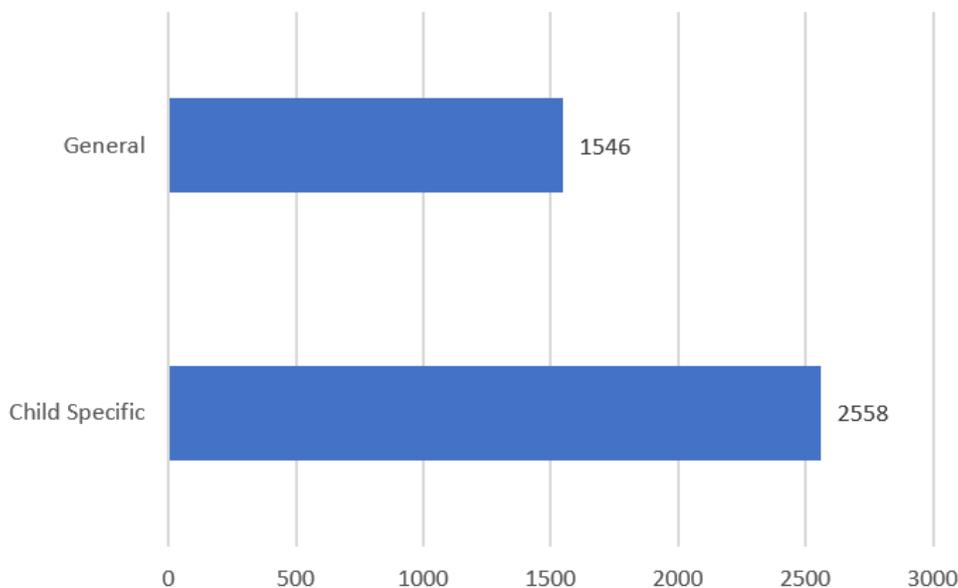
Spanish Queue makes up no more than 1% of ORCAH calls.

## Foster Care

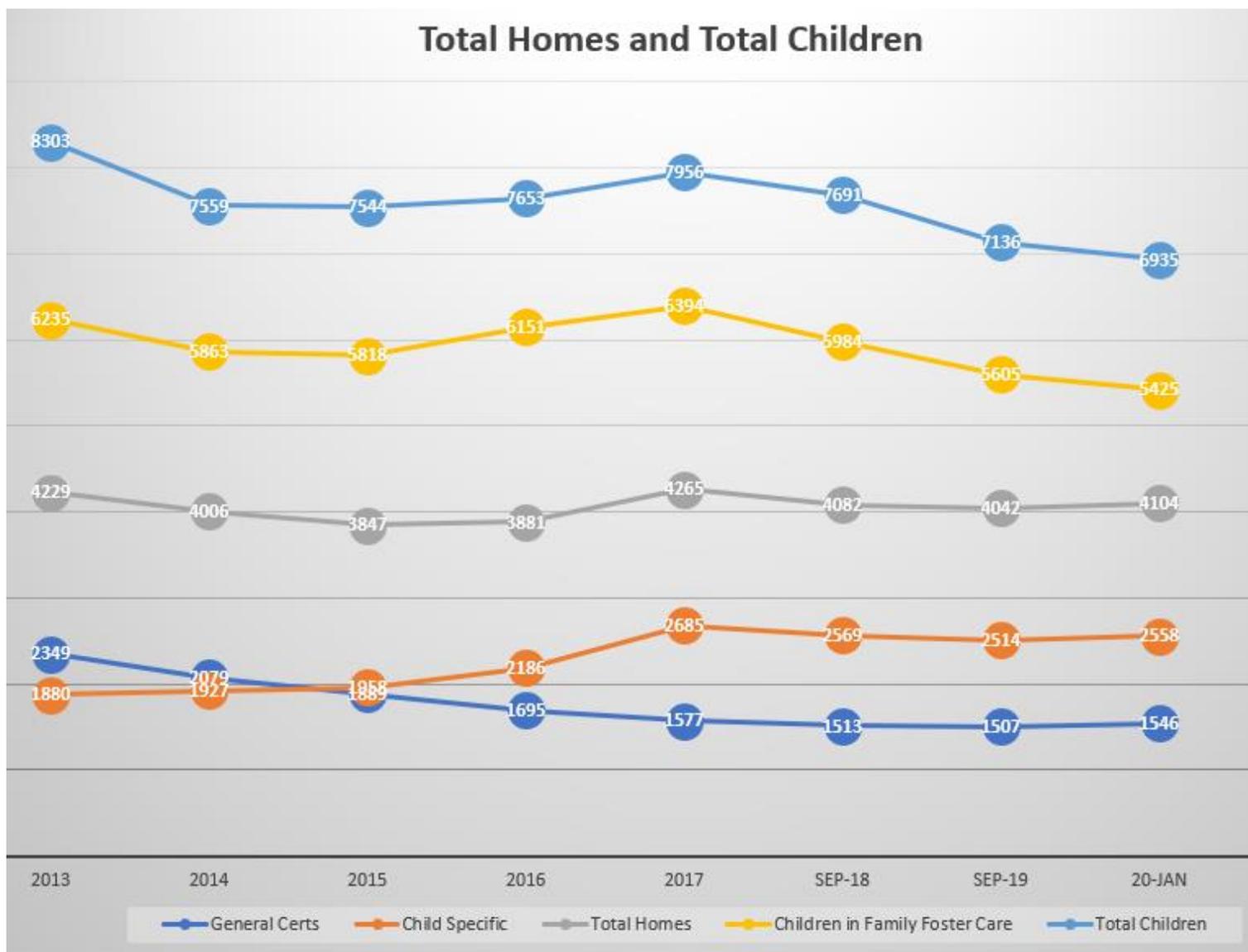
Foster care efforts are focused in three primary categories: Safely reducing the number of children who enter the foster care system; safely reducing the length of stay in the foster care system; and increasing foster system capacity to match the unique needs of every child with a safe, stable and caring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

### DHS certified providers: increasing capacity

Having more foster homes available that are able to meet a child's individual care needs will help ensure an appropriate first-time placement. DHS has multiple efforts aimed at increasing the number of available foster homes, including a recruitment partnership with Every Child (currently in multiple counties and aiming for a presence in all counties by 2022) and the hiring of 15 foster family recruitment champions to cover Oregon by the end of 2020. These charts reflect data as of January 31, 2020. We are continuing to see an uptick in total number of foster homes as the number of children in care has declined.



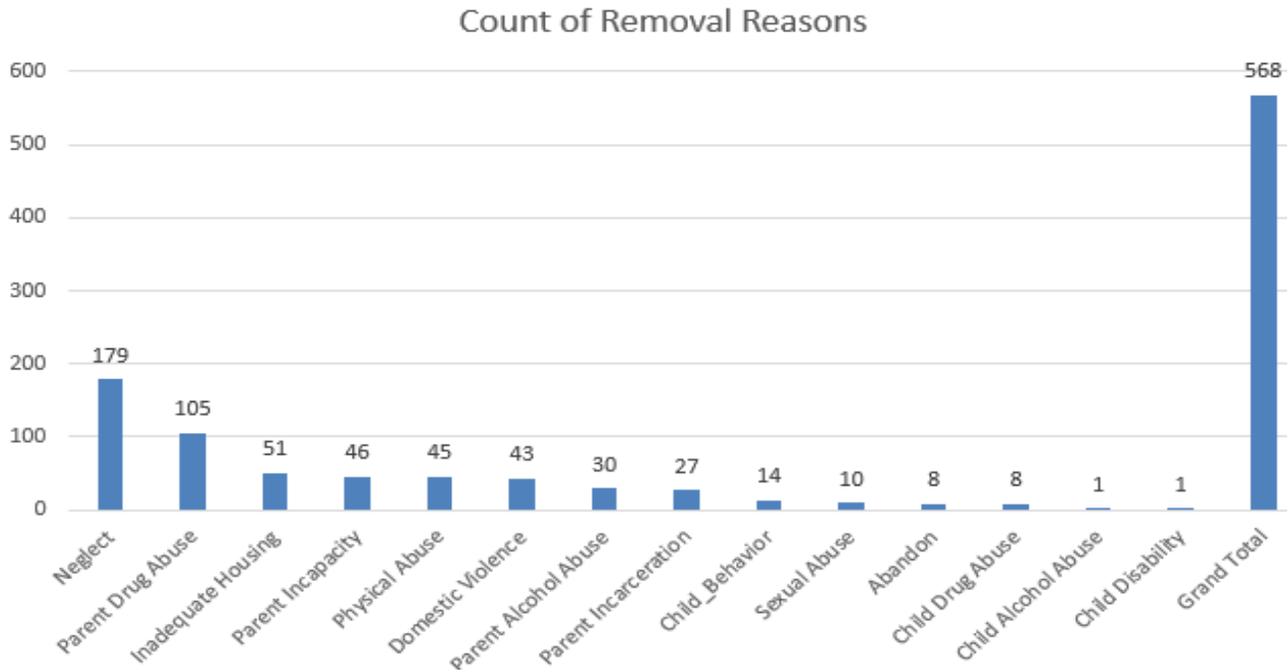
## Total Homes and Total Children



**Definitions:** **Certificate of Approval (General Certs):** 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. **Child Specific:** These are foster homes that are open only for specific children, often kinship/relative family placements. **Children in Family Foster Care:** The number of children in DHS care who are determined to need family foster care rather than treatment or a higher level of care.

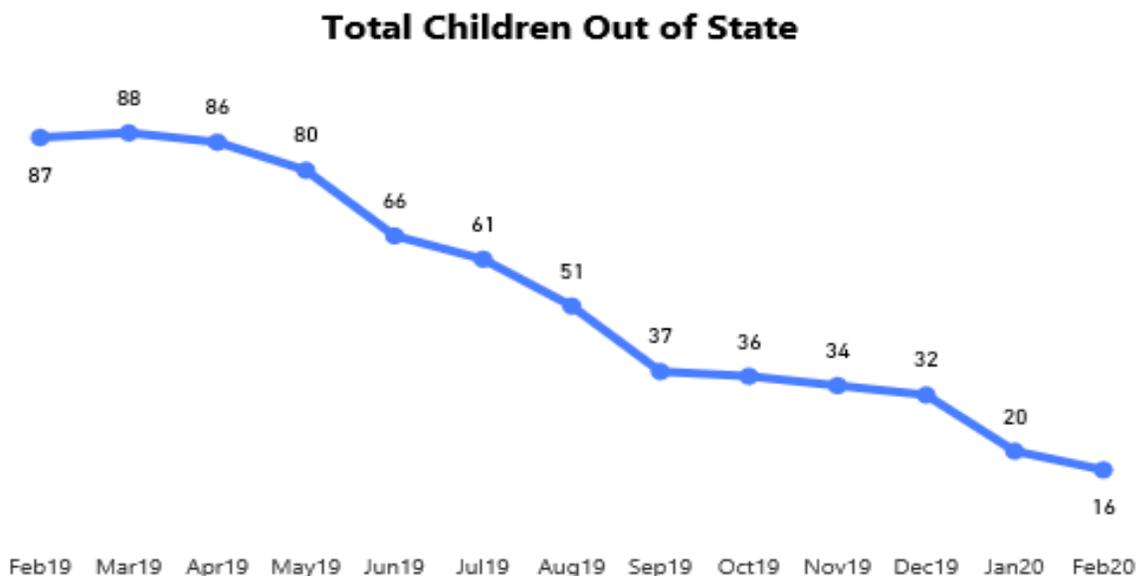
## Factors for children entering foster care

Data reflects the primary reason for children entering care in the month of December, pulled 2/13/20. A child may have more than one factor related to entry. Total # of children= 236

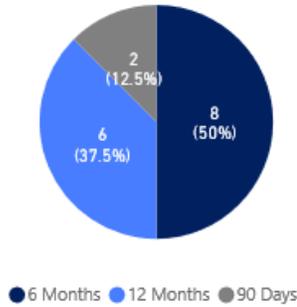


## Youth in foster care receiving treatment services outside Oregon

Oregon does not have capacity in residential treatment programs to serve all children and youth with complex or specialized needs. As a result, DHS sometimes places youth in treatment programs outside of Oregon. DHS is working with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and other partners to expand capacity to serve children and youth in Oregon. We now have 16 children in out-of-state treatment services, the lowest number in the past year.

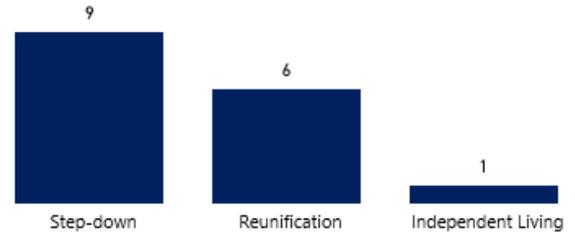


### Timeline for Completing Treatment



Note: Timeline is time in which kids are expected to be done with treatment and back in-state

### Return Plan Category



\*Return plan and treatment data as of 2/13/2020

## Children and young adults in foster care in temporary lodging

All children and young adults in the custody of Child Welfare should be provided services and placements that meet their needs. When efforts to find an immediate placement and supportive services are exhausted, a child or young adult may experience temporary lodging. Temporary lodging involves a child or young adult being housed in a hotel with DHS staff while an appropriate placement is developed. Those in temporary lodging have access to school, services and appropriate daytime activities.

Oregon currently lacks the type of services or capacity among existing providers to meet the needs of all children and young adults in its care in an appropriate placement. Child Welfare continues working to decrease the use of temporary lodging and has recently hired a Statewide Resource Development Manager, Kim Keller, as part of these efforts. Kim has worked in a variety of child welfare positions, with a background in field service, supervisory, and management positions spanning more than 25 years. She has had success in utilizing creative solutions addressing temporary lodging from her most recent work in District 16 (Beaverton). By March 31st, a comprehensive plan is due that will address the necessary efforts to come into compliance with our settlement agreement.

### Children and young adults in temporary lodging in January 2020

Total children and young adults in temporary lodging in January 2020	Cumulative number of children and young adults in temporary lodging in 2020 as of February 14
19	25

## 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.

### Trend in Social Service Specialist (SSS1) staffing

Total # of New SSS1 Caseworkers	10
Total # of SSS1 Caseworker Separations	1
Total # of SSS1 Caseworker Promotions	0
Retirements (already counted within Separations)	0

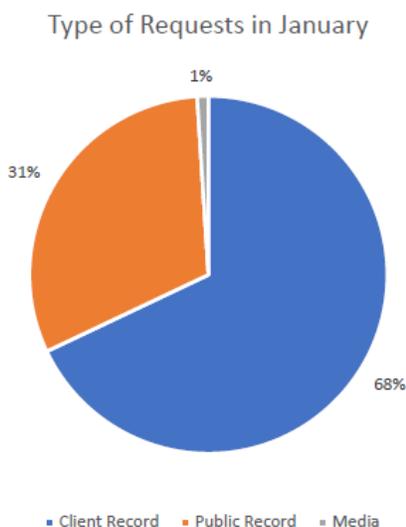
This is a monthly picture of the SSS1 workforce, which includes every type of caseworker position. The table reflects the most recent data available for January 2020, pulled 2/18/2020.

## Operational Support

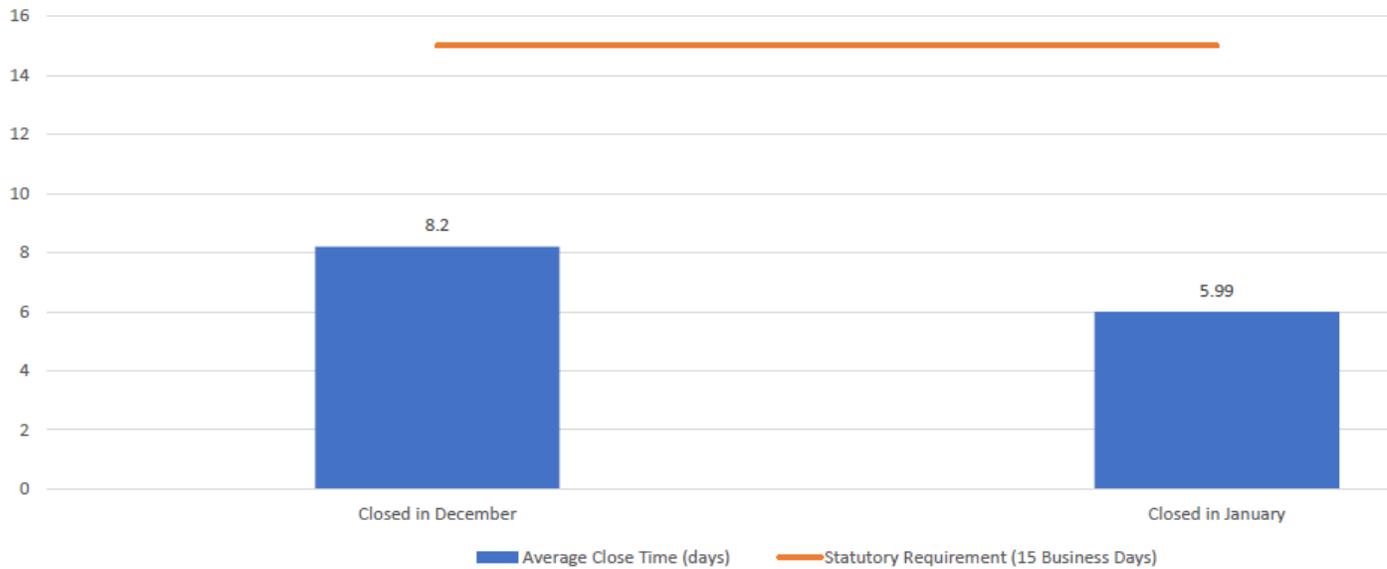
The Governor's Executive Order included direction to address operational challenges, including compliance with public records law and ensuring accurate and timely data is available to improve operations, processes and decision-making.

### Public records request processing

DHS created a centralized Public Records Unit (PRU) 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 and the average time to close the requests. The Public Records Unit continues to reduce the average processing time, which is currently at 5.99 days.



### Average Close Time (Business 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. These instances could 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.

## February priorities

### CHILD SAFETY:

- CIRT (Critical Incident Review Team) leadership met with DHS Shared Services to develop a 2020 plan for Suicide Prevention Training for all DHS staff and in the process of hiring two new CIRT coordinators.

### FOSTER CARE AND TREATMENT SERVICES:

- We are currently developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Behavioral Health Treatment Foster Care after a successful Request for Information closed at the end of January. This will be followed by pilot contracts in July 2020. The long-term goal is to create a permanent and sustainable Behavioral Health Treatment Foster Care level of care by January 2022 after an 18-month pilot using Evidence-Based or promising practice approaches.
- Treatment Services is in contract negotiations for an additional 18 Behavioral Residential Services beds by Fall of 2020.
- 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. There are 18 KEEP Groups operating through Options Counseling PDX, Oregon Community Programs & Oregon Social Learning Center.

### OPERATIONAL SUPPORT:

- The development and deployment of the automated dashboards for child welfare data as requested by the Governor and consultant group, A&M, is continuing to help connect staff with real-time data.
- In February, we continue to develop our workgroup to consider improvements to child welfare staff engagement, development of a complementary supervisor survey, and planning for next steps within research upon data collection from the survey.

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## TEMPORARY LODGING:

- Recently appointed Child Welfare Deputy of Programs, Lacey Andresen, will work with Resource Development Manager Kim Keller to assist with field engagement and practice improvements to eliminate the need for temporary lodging. Communication to the field has been consistent around required trainings which provide staff with accurate information regarding temporary lodging and ensure compliance with the settlement agreement.
- Discussions continue for development of BRS Basic Residential Programs in the Portland area serving the Latinx community as we continue to focus on increasing capacity for all levels of placement.
- A statement of work review and contract development for BRS Short-Term Stabilization Program specializing in Substance Use Disorder treatment is underway.

## WORKFORCE:

- The new Child Welfare Training Manager continues to focus on training and retention of workers.
- New recruitments to establish applicant pools for Child Welfare districts and branches with high attrition rates are continuing.