

Oregon Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Progress Report



This month in Child Welfare:

This month has been a challenging one due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time of uncertainty, we are continuing to serve our communities, and thinking and working creatively and professionally to meet their needs. There has been much hard work as we undergo transformation and it will continue. We have moved much of our workforce to telework and have worked with our partners, such as Every Child, to continue supporting our families.

In early March, the legislative session ended prematurely, and some key Child Welfare initiatives were left on the table. This included funding for additional key positions. For a full report, please see the [legislative wrap up](#) from DHS.

In late February, we were honored to have two visiting delegations in Oregon. The International Foster Care Association sent a group of Japanese former foster youth to meet legislators and DHS leaders to learn how Oregon has one of the lowest congregate care rates in the country (5.3%). The federal government's top child welfare official, Administration of Children and Families Assistant Secretary Lynn Johnson, also visited to learn about the DHS/Every Child initiative to leverage support and recruitment of foster families.

We have seen a significant amount of change both in how we do business and live our personal lives in the past few weeks. I have been proud to see our community and workforce come together to support the needs of children and families.



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

National Social Work Month

The Oregon Department of Human Services (Oregon DHS), Child Welfare Program is celebrating National Social Work Month in March.

The Department recently named Dave Owens the 2020 recipient of the annual Tom Moan Memorial Award, which recognizes and promotes leadership and outstanding achievement by caseworkers in the field of child welfare.

The awardee is chosen through nominations from community organizations, Child Welfare employees, and organizational partners and will travel to attend the National Association of Social Work Conference in Washington, D.C. All expenses for the award are raised by DHS staff and the Tom Moan award committee. Moan was a career child welfare caseworker and administrator in Oregon.

Owens is a caseworker with 20 years of experience in Lane County. Owens was awarded to recognize his exceptional skill at family engagement, connections to community partners and the high level of respect he has from youth and families.

Pictured from left to right: Dave Owens and District Manager John Radich



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 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>).

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Child Safety

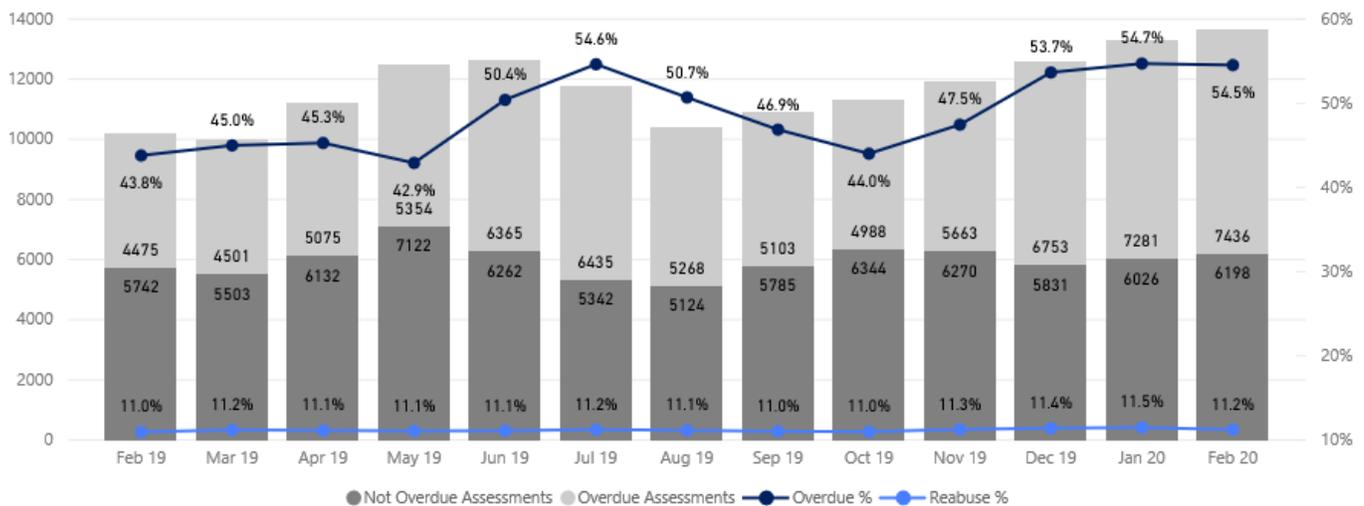
Child Welfare receives reports of potential child abuse, assesses situations and prepares safety plans to assist children and families, working closely with law enforcement and other community partners. In some cases, a safety plan is put in place, which enables a child to stay at home with the family. 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. 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, listed on this chart as “re-abuse”) within 12 months of their initial report. The federal target is 9.1 percent.

Data from March 27, 2020

Historical Overdue Assessments:



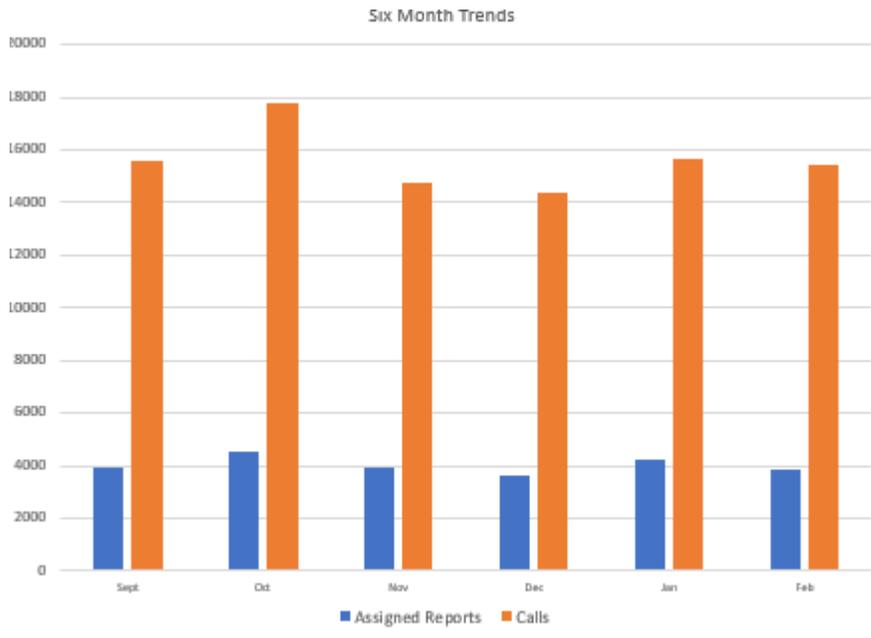
Note: Historical % of Overdue Assessments are based off Point-in-Time data

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 Prevention and Fatality Review program is currently building out prevention work focused on chronic neglect, safe sleep and suicide, three areas which make up many of the child fatalities in the state. In February, CIRTs were gathered for four child fatalities.

Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH)

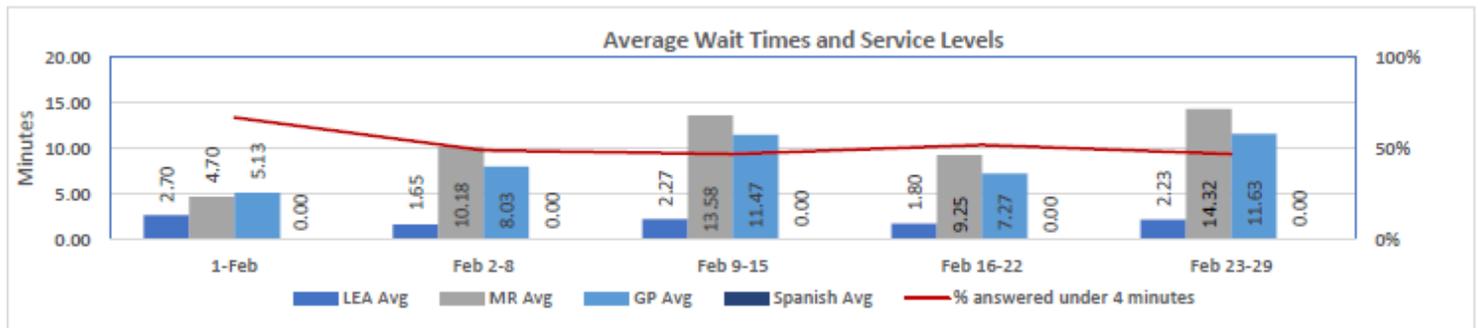
Over 2019, 15 regional child abuse reporting hotlines were centralized into a single hotline called the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) to improve safety, consistency and customer service. By consolidating 15 regional hotlines into one and streamlining screening processes, Child Protective Services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



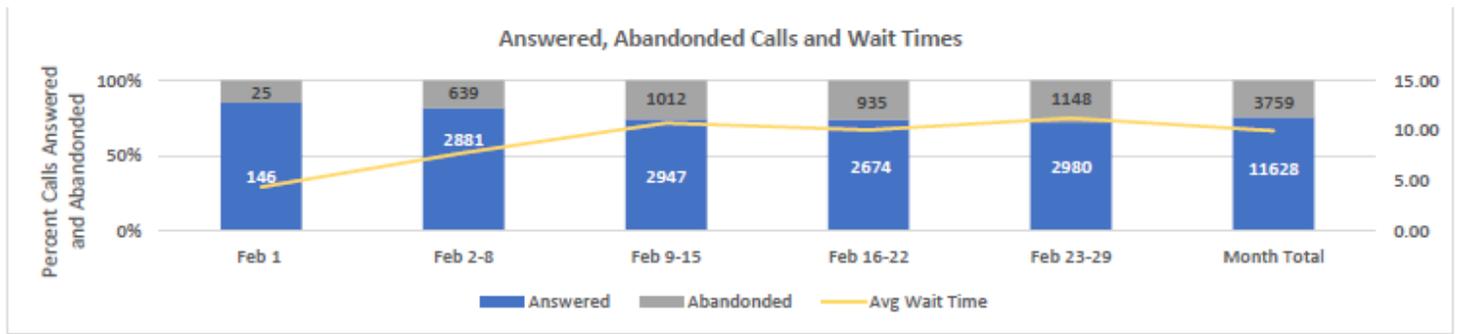
ORCAH average wait times

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. Based on national best practice, the service level goal is to answer within four minutes.

Data for February 2020



LEA: Law Enforcement Agencies, MR: Mandatory Reporters, GP: General Public



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

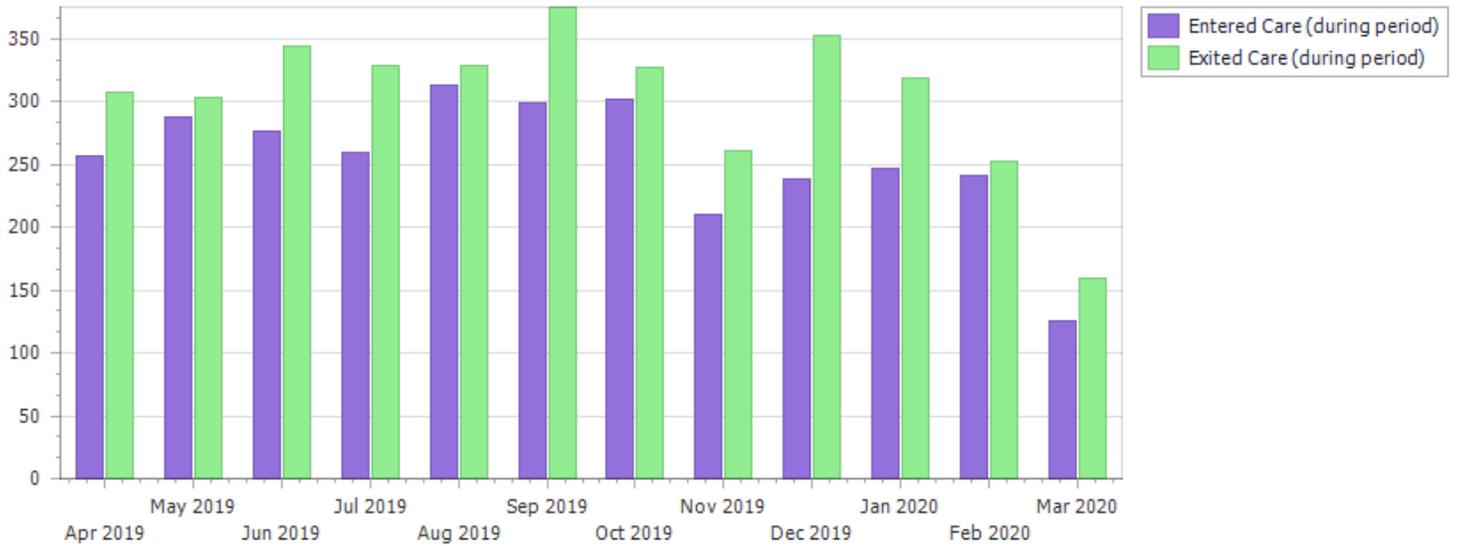
DHS has a priority to seek relative placement for children entering care, to maintain family and community connections. This category of caregivers is called “child-specific homes.” In February, approximately 35% of initial placements were with relatives when children entered care. When those placements are not possible, DHS finds certified foster families (“general providers/certification families”) that are able to meet a child’s individual care needs. In order to expand the number of general certification homes available, multiple efforts to recruit families are underway including a partnership with Every Child (currently in multiple counties) and the hiring of 15 foster family recruitment champions. These charts reflect data as of January 31, 2020. We are continuing to see the number of children in care continue to decline.

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.

	19-Nov	Dec-19	Jan-20	Desired Direction	Direction
Child Specific Providers	2357	2558	2441	N/A	N/A
General Providers	1360	1546	1389	↑	↓
Children in Care	7141	6956	6884	↓	↓

Count of children entering or exiting foster care, over time

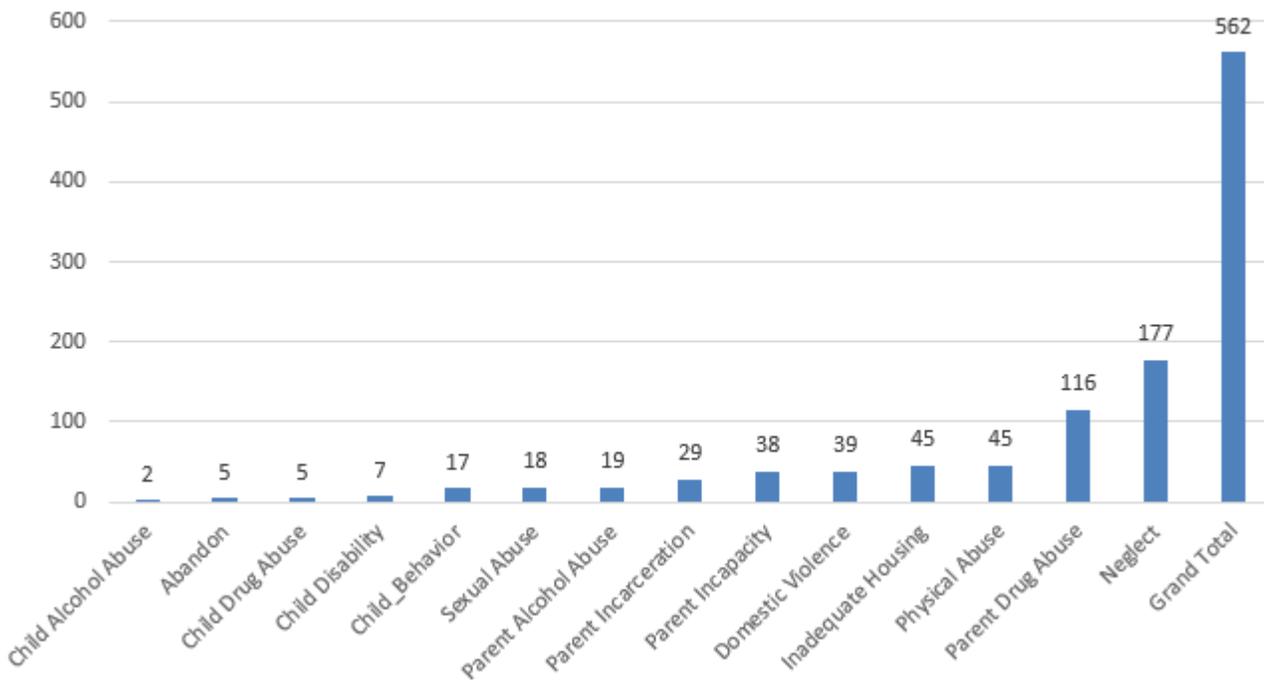
Report Time Period: April 1, 2019 - March 19, 2020



Factors for children entering foster care

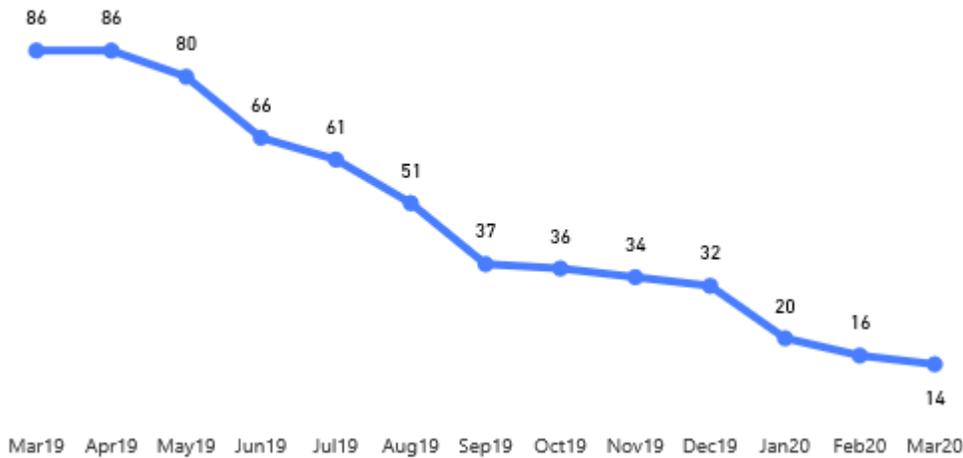
Data reflects the primary reason for children entering care in the month of January, pulled 3/2/20. A child may have more than one factor related to entry. Total # of children= 244 with 562 reasons

Count of Removal Reasons



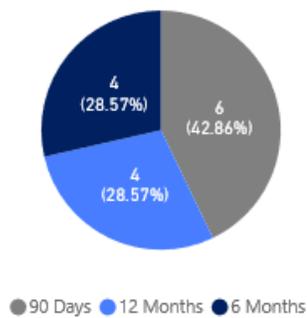
Youth in foster care receiving treatment services outside Oregon

Total Children Out of State



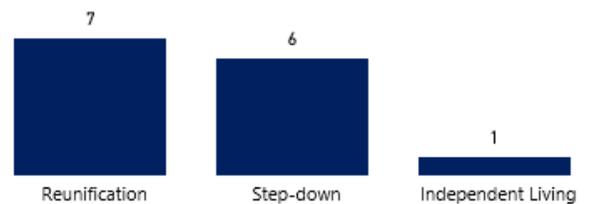
DHS is working with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and other partners to expand capacity to serve children and youth in Oregon. We continue to decrease the number of children in out-of-state treatment services, currently at 14, the lowest number in the past year.

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 3/27/2020

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.

Child Welfare continues working to decrease the use of temporary lodging and has recently hired a Statewide Resource Management Director, 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). Due to COVID-19, a new deadline of June 1 was set for a comprehensive plan to address the necessary efforts to come into compliance with our settlement agreement.

Children and young adults in temporary lodging in as of March 26, 2020

Current Number of Children and Young Adults in Temporary Lodging (3/26/2020)	Occasions of Temporary Lodging, year to date (3/26/2020)	Children in Temporary Lodging to date (3/26/2020)
2	47	37

Child Welfare Workforce

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Child Welfare is committed to hiring positions within the workforce. The most recent hire of Child Welfare Deputy Director of Workforce Development and Equity, Aprille Flint-Gerner and Training Manager Kim Lorz continue the commitment to training and onboarding recent hires even through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trend in Social Service Specialist (SSS1) staffing

This is a trendline picture of the entire Social Service Specialist (SSS1) workforce, which represents all caseworkers. Note: reports from February 2020 and prior include SSS1 Salary Range 24 only. Data pulled on 4/17/2020.

SSS1 Staffing	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20
New Caseworker hires	33	31	37	93	57	17	15	16
Separations (including Retirements)	20	22	22	21	27	19	13	16
Promoted Out (not counted as a Separation)	5	5	9	24	9	4	1	1
Retirements	0	0	3	0	1	4	1	0

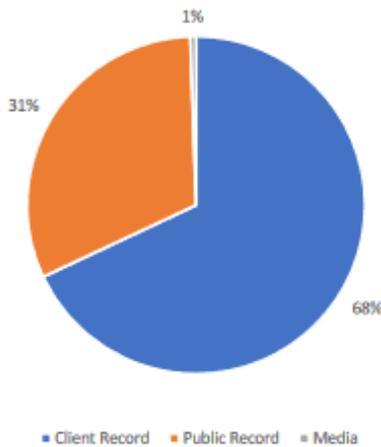
Operational Support

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.

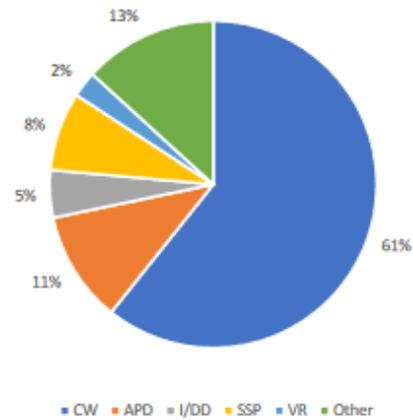
Public records request processing

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 5.82 days.

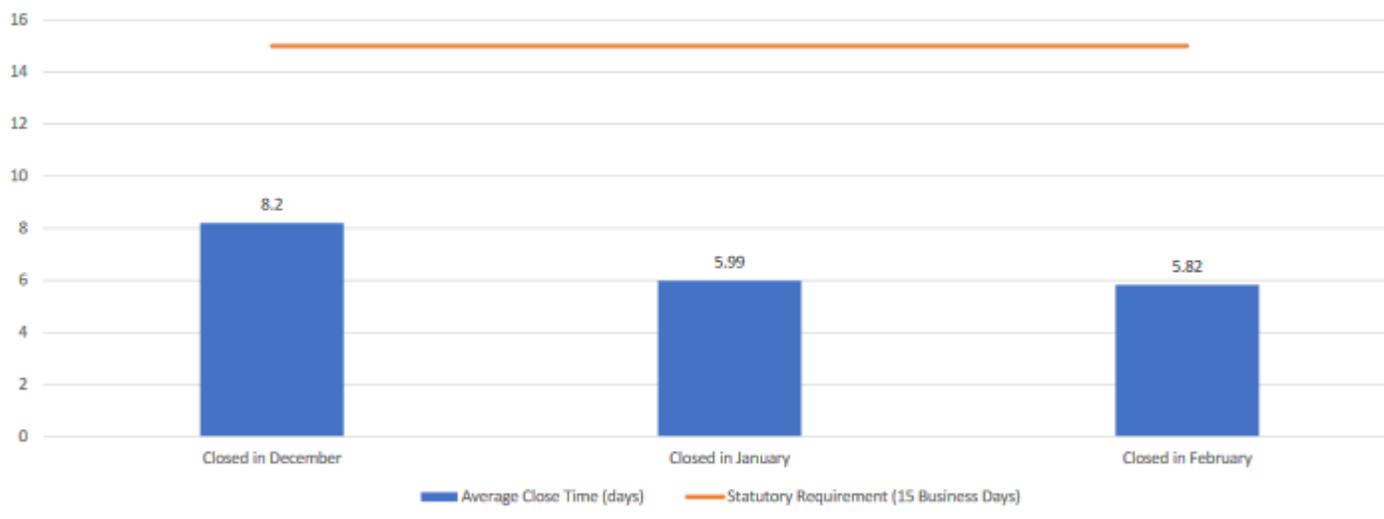
Type of Requests in February



Requests by Program in February



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 accomplishments

CHILD SAFETY:

CIRT has officially separated from the Child Safety program and is now the Fatality Prevention and Review program. Two new CIRT coordinators have been hired and started in late March.

FOSTER CARE AND TREATMENT SERVICES:

- Every Child partnered with DHS Child Welfare to build an initiative called My NeighbOR, to support foster families and children in care during COVID-19. This includes coverage of the entire state, working with public-private partnerships in different geographic locations to set up anchor-site locations and build out a pre-screened volunteer base to support the needs of families during this pandemic. These needs might include tangible items such as diapers and wipes, educational games, grocery assistance, and more.
- DHS and OHA met in February to prioritize two joint initiatives so far. These are: 1) creating next day automatic assignment for children placed in foster care to a Coordinated Care Organization to ensure they can access health services immediately and, 2) a mobile response pilot in D2 to create co-located mental health services in a BRS setting, set to begin in July.
- Child Welfare is identifying the Family First leadership team and working with Chapin Hall and Casey Family Programs as technical assistance partners. The Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) requirements related to FFPSA and Senate Bill 171 are being implemented for the July 1 start date. The prevention plan is being developed and will be involving partners prior to it being finalized and submitted.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT:

- The Secretary of State released the OR-Kids system audit, finding that it meets basic requirements, but improvements could be made to improve usability. The recommendations align with current efforts already underway to improve the system, and Child Welfare will track and monitor progress implementing the recommendations.

TEMPORARY LODGING:

- Resource Management Director Kim Keller is continuing her work 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.

WORKFORCE:

- The new Child Welfare workforce deputy onboarding in March, Aprille Flint Gerner, will take over leadership of the workforce development and training initiatives and the various initiatives related to services for LGBTQIA+ children and young adults.