



State of Rhode Island  
***Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families***

November 1, 2021

The Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi  
Speaker of the House  
323 State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Speaker Shekarchi:

In accordance with Article 1 as Amended of Public Law 2021-162, I am enclosing a 60-day report relating to the progress of implementing the accreditation plan filed in accordance with RIGL 42-72-5.3. The document covers the period of August 30, 2021 – October 28, 2021.

Please contact me at 401-528-3540 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kevin Aucoin  
DCYF Acting Director

Attachments:  
60-Day Report (August 30 – October 28, 2021)



# Accreditation: 60-Day Report

## August 30 – October 28, 2021

This 60-day report by the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with Article 1 as Amended of Public Law 2021-162. The report describes progress made in implementing the accreditation plan filed in accordance with RIGL 42-72-5.3 and any includes any projected changes needed to effectuate that plan.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

Major activities with the Council on Accreditation (COA) during the reporting period have included:

1. COA and DCYF held a critical program meeting on 9/20/21 to discuss the scope of service standards that the Department will be responsible to achieve. After reviewing the Department's operations, COA concluded that the Department will be responsible for COA's Administrative and Management, Service Delivery Administration, and Child and Family Services Standards (these standards can be viewed online at <https://coanet.org/public-standards/>).
2. The Department held a contract agreement meeting with COA on 9/22/21. Since then, the Department and COA have made several enhancements to the draft contract language. DCYF expects the final agreement to be signed next week, and we will include a copy of the agreement to the General Assembly with the next 60-day report.
3. The Department paid the \$2,500 accreditation application fee on 9/28/21.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH PEER STATES

DCYF met with two other jurisdictions who have successfully achieved and maintained accreditation (Missouri on 9/24/21 and Tennessee on 10/22/21). The purpose of these peer-to-peer meetings was to learn more about the quality improvement and quality assurance structures and staffing those other states are using to implement and attest to COA standards. The learnings are being analyzed to see how we might adjust the structure and staffing in the Divisions of Performance Improvement, Child Protective Services (CPS) and the Family Service Units (FSU) to accommodate the accreditation process. Any additional staffing determined to be needed for quality improvement and quality assurance functions will be included in DCYF's Phase Two Hiring Plan.

## PHASE ONE HIRING PLAN

The Department has made significant progress in executing the Phase One Hiring Plan that was described in the previous 60-day report. As you may recall, in the first phase, the Department has identified 52 positions that focus on needed increases in frontline and supervisory positions in its Family Service Units (casework) division and Child Protective Services (investigation) division, as well as infrastructure positions that will help support both the large increase in staff and the accreditation process.

As of the end of the 60-day reporting period, the progress on the 52 Phase One hires is as follows:

- **7 FTEs have begun working with the Department:**
  - 4 – FSU Supervisors (started 10/24/21)
  - 1 – Paralegal Aide (started 9/26/21)
  - 1 – Implementation Aide (started 10/24/21)
  - 1 – Human Services Business Officer (started 10/24/21)
  
- **29 FTEs have been hired and will begin working with the Department on 11/7/21:**
  - 17 – Social Caseworker IIs (FSU)
  - 8 – Child Protective Investigators
  - 2 – Clinical Training Specialists
  - 1 – Social Caseworker II (Voluntary Extension of Care)
  - 1 – Casework Supervisor II (Voluntary Extension of Care)
  -
  
- **7 FTEs have been hired and will begin working with the Department on 11/21/21:**
  - 3 – Social Caseworker IIs (FSU)
  - 2 – Child Protective Investigators
  - 1 – Senior Human Services Policy and Systems Specialist
  - 1 – Social Caseworker II (Community Services & Behavioral Health)
  
- **9 FTEs are currently being recruited:**
  - 4 – Child Support Technicians
  - 3 – CPS Supervisors
  - 1 – Office Manager (Legal)
  - 1 – Economic and Policy Analyst I

Once these staff are onboarded, DCYF will request workforce diversity data from the Department of Administration to include in the next 60-day report.

It is also important to note that the Department has worked tirelessly to maintain its current staffing as it works to execute the Phase One Hiring Plan. DCYF's practice over the past few years works has been to diligently maintain a low vacancy rate with priority given to backfilling frontline positions. Since the start of SFY 22, the agency has hired 68 individuals to backfill existing vacancies.

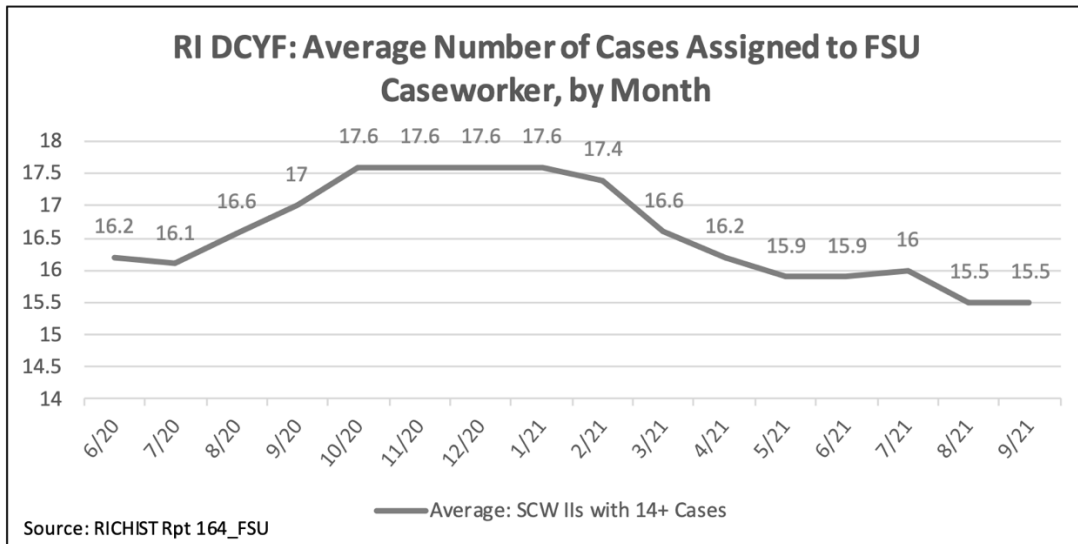
It is complex work to “staff up” the Department by 91 FTEs; the DCYF HR team, DCYF hiring managers and DOA have worked diligently to recruit and hire the new staff.

**CASELOAD INFORMATION**

The Department is not far enough along with the accreditation process to have seen a reduction in caseload sizes. Reductions in caseload sizes are expected to be seen a few months after the bulk of the Phase One hires are onboarded in November.

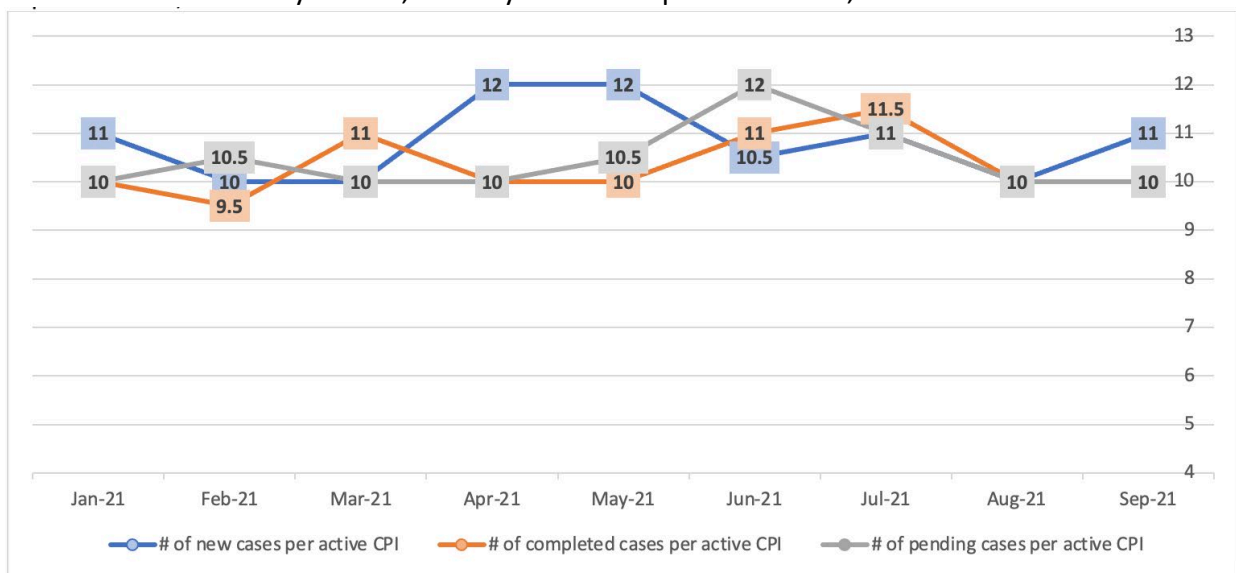
As shown in Figure 1, Family Service Units caseload sizes have decreased over the past two months from about 16 cases per worker to an average of 15.5.

**Figure 1.** Average Number of Cases Assigned to FSU Caseworker, by Month



As shown in Figure 2, the Child Protective Services investigators are receiving around 11 new investigations per month, up from 10.5 as reported in the previous 60-day report.

**Figure 2.** Median caseloads (new, completed, and pending investigations per active CPI\*), by month, January 2021 to September 2021, RI DCYF.



Data notes: Source-RPT 259, 500

\*Active investigator: investigator who had 8 or more investigations in a month.

## NEXT STEPS

In the next 60 days, the Department anticipates it will reach several milestones:

1. Signing of the formal COA Agreement and payment of the related COA accreditation engagement fee (\$195,477).
2. Holding of the “intake” meeting — a kickoff meeting where the Department will meet its COA accreditation coordinator and go over the Self-Study process, which will be a primary focus of the Department’s COA work in 2022.
3. Hiring of all 52 staff included in the Phase One Hiring Plan.
4. Issuing an RFP to contract with a project manager who has subject matter expertise in supporting states in achieving human services accreditation. If the proposals submitted render suitable project management resources, then the Department will enter into a contract for the services.

Also, the Department has initiated the process of developing its Phase Two Hiring Plan in anticipation of beginning the recruitment and selection process in January 2022. Phase Two will include 39 new staff with a focus in two areas:

1. **Additional frontline staff.** The Department will assess the positive impacts of the Phase One hires on caseload sizes and make additional investments in the service of achieving caseload standards
2. **Quality improvement and quality assurance staff.** As mentioned above, the Department is consulting with COA as well as peer states who are accredited to determine the right quality improvement and quality assurance structure and staffing needed to successfully achieve and maintain accreditation.