



Accreditation: 60-Day Report

October 29 – December 27, 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 received payment of the accreditation engagement fee (\$195,477) on 12/16/21 and signed the formal agreement with DCYF. A copy of the agreement has been included as an attachment.
2. DCYF and COA rescheduled its Intake (kickoff) meeting to 1/13/2022. The Department was instructed to postpone the 12/6/21 meeting until the formal agreement was in place.
3. The Department met with COA on 12/15/21 to receive guidance regarding limits to the number of children residing in foster homes. This information will help support future updates to foster care regulations.

ADDITIONAL KEY ACTIVITIES

- The State issued an RFP (Solicitation #7669818) on 12/15/21 to contract with a project manager who has subject matter expertise in supporting states in achieving human services accreditation. Proposals must be submitted by 1/12/22.
- The Department held informational sessions with Senior Leadership (11/18/21) and the Resource Families Division (12/16/21) to provide a baseline education about the contents of the COA standards.

STAFFING PROGRESS

The Department has nearly completed its Phase One Hiring Plan related to COA. In the first phase, the Department 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. It is the Department's hope that

additional frontline staffing will provide the capacity to engage in the quality assurance and quality improvement and quality assurance work that is central to the pursuit of accreditation.

As of the end of this 60-day period:

- **7 FTEs began working with the Department during the previous 60-day period:**
 - 4 – FSU Supervisors
 - 1 – Paralegal Aide
 - 1 – Implementation Aide
 - 1 – Human Services Business Officer

- **29 FTEs began 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 began 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)

- **3 CPS Supervisors began working with the Department on 12/19/21**

- **6 FTEs are currently being recruited:**
 - 4 – Child Support Technicians (Hired; 3 begin on 1/2/22 and 1 begins 1/30/22)
 - 1 – Economic and Policy Analyst I (Hired with start date of 1/2/22)
 - 1 – Chief Implementation Aide (Legal Division) (Position is awaiting budget approval; this is a title change from the previous 60-day report)

The Department has diversity data available for 49 of these hires: 32 identify as White, 8 as Black/African American, 6 as Hispanic/Latino, and 3 as Asian/Asian American.

Also, the Department has created a Phase Two Hiring Plan for the remaining 39 new staff that were appropriated; the plan is included at the bottom of this report. The Phase Two hiring plan focuses on additional frontline staff, as well as ensuring the right quality improvement and quality assurance staffing needed to successfully achieve and maintain accreditation. DCYF has consulted with the Local 580 executive leadership team, and they are supportive of the plan.

EXPENDITURES TO DATE

By the end of December, DCYF projects to spend \$1.1M in general revenue toward COA accreditation. Additionally, DCYF has encumbered roughly \$250K in expenditures to be processed before the end of the fiscal year. Table 1 below displays the expenditures by

statutory program. Please note that personnel expenditures are only through 12/18/21 due to a lag in payroll.

Table 1. Accreditation Expenditures by DCYF Statutory Program

DCYF COA Spend through 12-31-21	Sum of Expenditure	Sum of Encumbrance
Central Management	129,783	60,772
Child Welfare	1,125,248	121,543
Children's Behavioral Health	57,005	60,772
Grand Total	1,312,036	243,087
<i>*Personnel is through pay period ending 12-18-21</i>		

Table 2 below describes the breakdown by expense type. The majority of the expenses were made toward personnel. Other major expenses include the accreditation fee, computers and office supplies.

Table 2. DCYF Accreditation Expenditures by Expenditure Type

DCYF COA Spend through 12-31-21	Sum of Expenditure	Sum of Encumbrance
Personnel	1,011,152	
Computer Supplies And Software	1,128	-
Computers And Computer Equipment (\$500 to \$4,999)	101,779	-
Dues and Fees	195,477	
Financial Services: Other	2,500	-
Furniture And Equipment	-	240,887
Other Buildings And Grounds Services	-	2,200
Grand Total	1,312,036	243,087
<i>*Personnel is through pay period ending 12-18-21</i>		

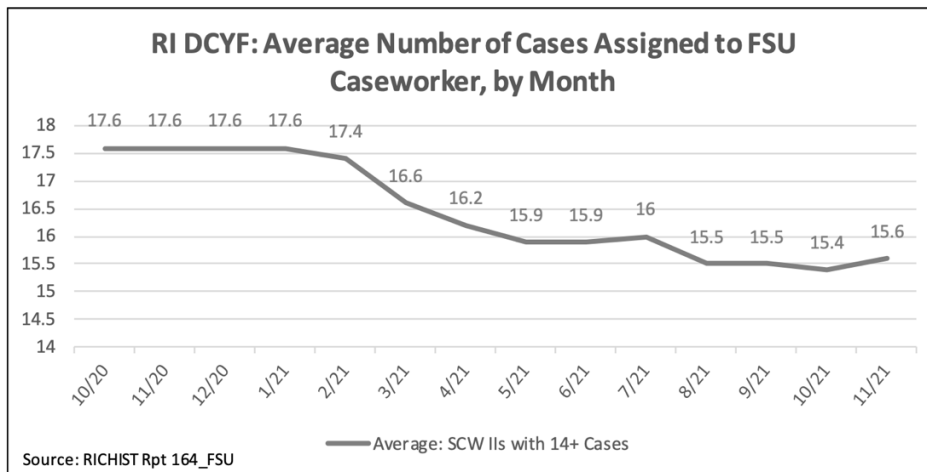
DCYF projects to spend \$4.7M more on personnel for the remainder of FY 22, for a total personnel spend of \$5.7M. Other anticipated costs include additional furniture and office space reconfiguration.

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 starting in February or March, after the new hires begin to hold caseloads.

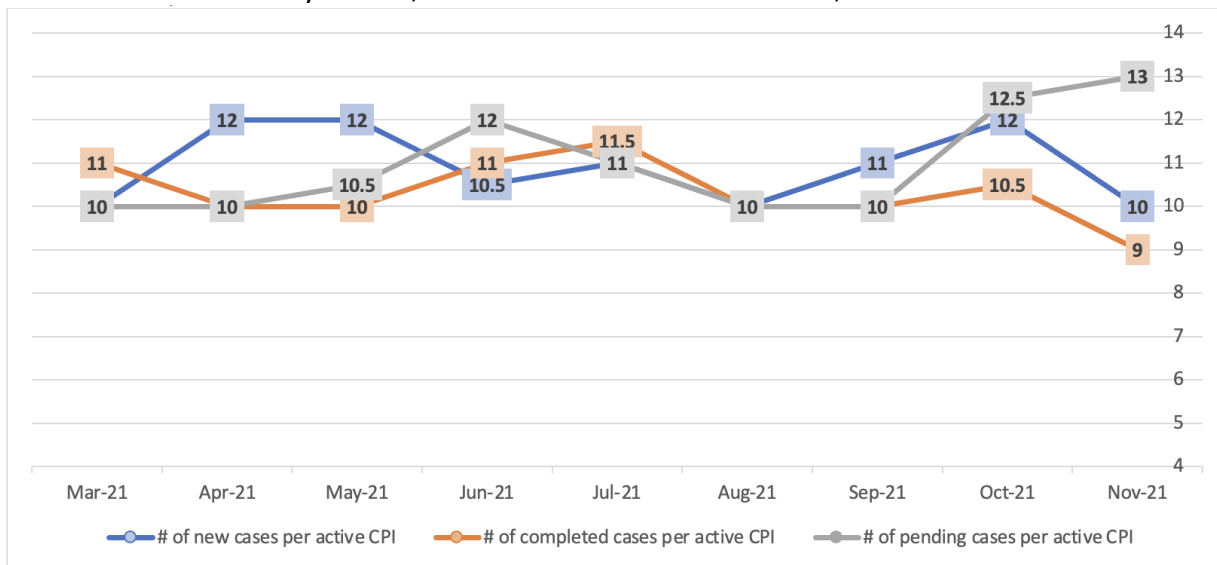
As shown in Figure 1, Family Service Units caseload sizes have remained stable over the past two months from about 15.5 cases per worker to an average of 15.6.

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 10 new investigations per month, down from 11 as reported in the previous 60-day report.

Figure 2. Median caseloads (new, completed, and pending investigations per active CPI*), by month, March 2021 to November 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. 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. As stated, the kickoff has been rescheduled for 1/13/2022.
2. Hiring of all 52 staff included in the Phase One Hiring Plan.

3. Execution of the Phase Two Hiring Plan. The Department will immediately begin the recruitment process.
4. Review of the submitted proposals 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.
5. Additional educational sessions for DCYF divisions so that staff begin to develop an understanding of the COA standards related to their work.

Accreditation: Phase Two Hiring Plan

January-June 2022

Frontline Investments (34 staff)

Position: Social Caseworker II

Grade: 24A

Needed: 15

Division/Unit: Family Service Units (FSU) regions 1, 2, 3 and 4

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To provide the Department with enough social caseworkers to meet the accreditation standards for FSU caseloads. COA recommends that no caseworker have more than 15 total cases, and that no individual caseworker have more than 10 children on their caseload who are in out-of-home care. As of December 2021, the Department had 1,696 children in out-of-home care, meaning the Department should aim to have 170 caseworkers.

Position: Casework Supervisor II

Grade: 28A

Needed: 2

Division/Unit: Family Service Units

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To maintain the 5:1 caseworker to supervisor ratio required by the COA and by Department policy, 2 FSU supervisors will be needed to support the additional 15 FSU caseworkers.

Position: Social Caseworker II

Grade: 24A

Needed: 3

Division/Unit: Support and Response Unit (SRU)

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To provide the Department with additional social caseworkers to meet the need in the agency's growing Support and Response Unit. In the fall of 2020, DCYF launched a specialized unit of social caseworkers to expand and enhance capacity to assess families who may need access to prevention services and supports who are not open to DCYF.

Position: Casework Supervisor II

Grade: 28A

Needed: 1

Division/Unit: Support and Response Unit

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To accommodate the assignment of 3 additional social caseworkers to the Support in Response Unit due to increase in the volume of cases being referred to the SRU.

Position: Child Protective Investigator

Grade: 26A

Needed: 10

Division/Unit: Child Protective Services

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To bring the Department closer to the accreditation standards for CPS caseloads by adding two investigation units (10 investigators) to Child Protective Services. The COA caseload standard requires no more than 12 active investigations at a time for a given investigator and no more than 8 new investigations for a given investigator per month. Currently, investigators have a median of 13 active investigations and a median of 10 new cases per month.

Position: Supervisor-Child Protective Investigator

Grade: 31A

Needed: 2

Division/Unit: Child Protective Services

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To maintain the 5:1 investigator to supervisor ratio required by the COA and by Department policy, 2 CPS supervisors will be needed to support the 10 additional caseworkers.

Position: Social Caseworker II

Grade: 24A

Needed: 1

Division/Unit: Voluntary Relinquishment of Care Unit

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Alliance of Social Service Employees, Local 580

Justification: To provide the Department with 1 additional social caseworker to meet the caseload needs in Children's Behavioral Health.

Infrastructure Investments (5 staff)

Position: Clerk Secretary

Grade: 16A

Needed: 1

Division/Unit: FSU Region 2 (Bristol)

Union affiliation: Rhode Island Council 94, Local 2876

Justification: To add administrative support to Region 2, the only FSU region currently without a clerk secretary. These positions will help regions to improve documentation and organization that are critical to meet several COA standards.

Division of Performance Improvement, Research and Data Analytics (DPI) staff

Needed: 4

Justification: Based on the initial Accreditation Plan, the Department is reserving 4 positions to this division to support the quality assurance and quality improvement needs of the agency. The Department is working with COA to determine the best structure and staffing for this work.