



Accreditation: 60-Day Report

April 17, 2024 – June 15, 2024

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 2023-079. The report describes progress made in implementing the accreditation plan filed in accordance with RIGL 42-72-5.3 and includes any projected changes needed to effectuate that plan.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Through this reporting period and the next, the Department is finalizing its “Self Study” phase of work, which will be submitted on or before September 23, 2024. As a reminder, the Self Study is the largest and longest component of the COA process wherein DCYF will implement its plans for policy, practice, programmatic, and operations changes to achieve all COA standards.

The Department continues its extensive review of its operating procedures, and the creation of new procedures where needed. In the end, the Department will have written or amended nearly 60 policies operating procedures. The policies that have been approved to date are listed below (and all can be found at the Department’s website, at <https://dcyf.ri.gov/about-us/dcyf-policies-operating-procedures>.)

General Administration

- 100.0100 – Department Leadership
- 100.0130 – Effective Communication with Persons of Limited English Proficiency
- 100.0135 – Strategic Planning
- 100.0160 – Succession/Transition Planning
- 100.0165 – Research Protections and Data Requests
- 100.0205 – Implementing Department-Wide Change Initiatives
- 100.0230 – Facility Safety and Maintenance
- 100.0265 – Public Disclosure of Child Fatality and Near Fatality Information
- 100.0290 – Critical Event Reviews
- 100.0360 – Contracting and Contract Management
- 100.0385 – Technology-Based Service Delivery
- 100.0500 – Development, Maintenance and Distribution of Policies

Personnel

- 200.0045 – Interning, Volunteering and Shadowing at the Department
- 200.0060 – Code of Conduct
- 200.0065 – Training and Professional Development
- 200.0070 – DCYF Staff Onboarding and Support
- 200.0100 – Supervision of Staff
- 200.0105 – False Claims Act and Whistleblower Protections

Case Management

- 700.0005 – Reasonable Efforts
- 700.0015 – Delivery and Coordination of Support Services
- 700.0035 – Kinship Care
- 700.0045 – Contents and Format of Department Record Keeping
- 700.0055 – Adoption
- 700.0085 – Expectant and Parenting Youth in Out-of-Home Care
- 700.0115 – Youth Transition Planning and Support
- 700.0120 – Respite Care
- 700.0155 – Legal Guardianship and Kinship Guardianship Assistance
- 700.0170 – Placement Determinations, Referrals and Transitions
- 700.0175 – Voluntary Extension of Care
- 700.0180 – Enhanced Case Management for Voluntary Extension of Care Youth
- 700.0190 – Support and Response Unit
- 700.0225 – Home-Base Services Authorization Process
- 700.0230 – Family Search and Engagement
- 700.0250 – Prudent Parenting and Normalcy for Youth in Out-of-Home Care
- 700.0030 – Family Time

Medical

- 1000.0025 – Physical and Mental Healthcare for Children in Out-of-Home Care

The Department has also been working with the Office of Regulatory Reform to complete the promulgation of updated Foster Care and Adoption Regulations for Licensure.

Aside from the policy work, the Department has completed several other key COA projects during the reporting period, including:

- Publishing education materials for birth parents and their children. The materials are completed and have been translated into Spanish. During the next reporting period, the materials are being professionally published and staff will be training on how to distribute and discuss the contents of the materials with families they meet at the time of an investigation or when a new case opens to our Family Services Unit.
- Drafting of a Community Engagement Plan for calendar years 2024 and 2025

Additionally, the Department's COA Unit has begun the process to upload completed work to the COA team, who will review the evidence prior to their November site visit.

STAFFING PROGRESS

The Department continues its focus on backfilling existing vacancies, with an emphasis on its filling vacant frontline positions. As of April 22, the Department has 660 FTEs filled, as compared to 585 FTEs in October 2021, for a net gain of 75 employees.

The Department has 10 vacancies for social caseworkers in our Family Services Unit and 15 vacancies for child protective investigators. The Department anticipates that all these positions will be filled with a start date of July 28.

The Department also continues to look at attrition; see table below. A total of 26 employees left the Department in calendar year 2024.

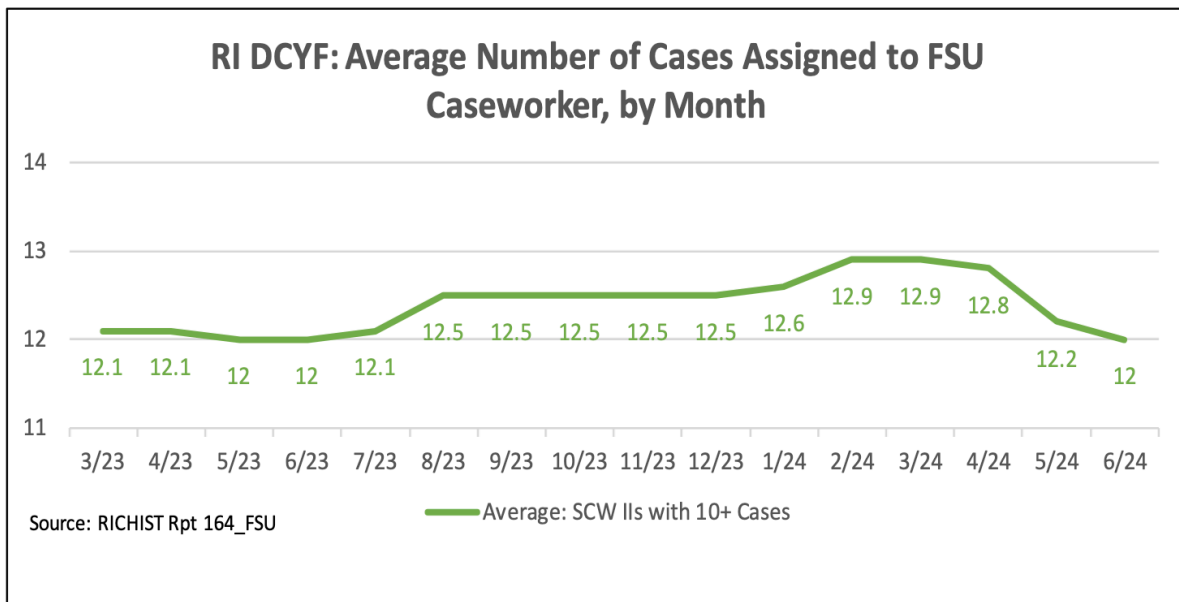
Table. Attrition of All DCYF Staff, by Calendar Year and Reason for Leaving

Reason for Leaving	Calendar Year						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bumped	0	0	3	0	1	1	0
Deceased	2	1	2	0	2	2	0
Failure to Pass Probation	7	1	1	0	0	1	0
Leave Return	0	1	0	4	1	1	0
Resignation	25	31	26	27	62	32	13
Retirement	16	18	20	24	5	12	3
Termination	4	5	7	5	10	7	1
Transfer In State	28	36	21	19	29	27	9
Transfer Out of State	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	84	93	80	79	110	83	26

CASELOAD INFORMATION

Figure 1 below shows the average number of families (cases) assigned to a Family Services Unit (FSU) caseworker, by month. This figure depicts caseworkers carrying 10 or more cases to include only experienced workers and new caseworkers who are nearing the end of their probationary period.

Figure 1. Average Number of Cases Assigned to FSU Caseworker, by Month (10+ Cases)



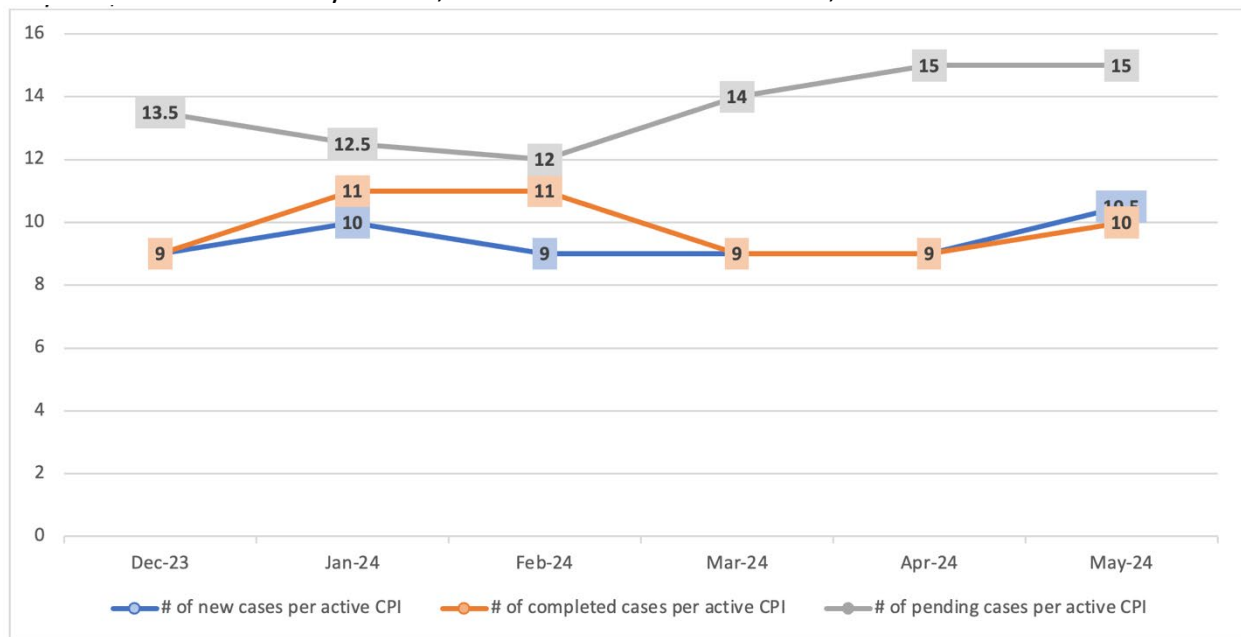
As a comparison: on March 1, 2020, just prior to the pandemic, the Department had an average of 15.4 cases per caseworker; as of the beginning of June 2024, the Department was at 12.0 cases per caseworker. During the last reporting period, caseload sizes decreased significantly.

Further decreases in caseload sizes are expected as the Department continues to fill its frontline vacancies.

COA’s personnel standard suggests that a FSU worker’s caseload “should have no more than 15 total families with no more than 10 children in out-of-home care.” The Department has adequate FTE resources available to meet the COA standard.

Figure 2 below shows that the Child Protective Services (CPS) investigators are receiving a median of 10.5 new investigations per month (blue line), which is an increase from the 10 cases as reported in the previous 60-day report. The median number of pending cases per child protective investigator (CPI) is 15 (grey line), which is an increase from the 14 as reported in the previous 60-day report.

Figure 2. Median caseloads (new, completed, and pending investigations per active CPI*), by month, October 2023 to March 2024, RI DCYF



Data notes: Source-RPT 259, 500

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

As we continue to fill existing vacancies, the Department anticipates further caseload reductions for CPIs. The accreditation standard suggests that CPI caseloads “generally do not exceed 12 active investigations at a time, including no more than 8 new investigations per month.” The Department has adequate FTE resources available to meet the COA standard.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next reporting period, the Department will complete the remaining policy work required for accreditation. The divisional directors will continue to focus on staff education on

and implementation of these new policies and procedures between now and the November Site Visit.

The Department is also still working to complete two key plans for the Department:

- a Risk Prevention and Management Plan, and related annual assessments.
- an interim Resource Development Plan, as the Department prepares to engage with an external partner to begin work on a comprehensive needs assessment related to its service array. The FY 2025 budget includes \$200,000, including \$100,000 from general revenues, for the Department to hire a consultant to support this project. Completion of the full comprehensive needs assessment is not required for our initial accreditation but will support reaccreditation in future years.

The internal COA team will also continue its monthslong process to organize and upload the hundreds of artifacts that COA will review over the course of the fall. An initial series of documents will be submitted on or before September 23, 2024, with supplementary pieces of evidence submitted by November 1.