



Accreditation: 60-Day Report

April 22, 2023 – June 20, 2023

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 includes any projected changes needed to effectuate that plan.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Execution of the Department's divisional project plans continues to be the primary focus as DCYF moves into the final year of its "Self Study" phase of work with the Council on Accreditation (COA). 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.

During the reporting period, the Department has been undergoing an extensive review of its Department Operating Procedures, and the creation of new operating procedures where needed. This process is expected to conclude by the end of August 2023, to ensure that the Fall is spent focused on implementation of any new program and practice changes.

In March, the Department also initiated the "Stakeholder Survey" phase of accreditation. This required phase provides an opportunity for various types of child welfare stakeholders to anonymously provide their viewpoints on perceived strengths and challenges of the Department. COA analyzes the responses and provides a report to the Department on findings later in the process. Thus far, more than 1,400 people have been invited to take the survey, including all staff, foster parents and contracted service providers.

Also, during the reporting period:

- Two workgroups are developing new education materials targeted at birth parents and their children. One workgroup is working on materials that will be provided to families at the time of investigation to help explain the process and rights and responsibilities of the family members. The other workgroup is focused on creating a guidebook for families who are receiving case management through the Department. These materials are intended to be put into practice in October.
- The Department implemented Transition and Succession Plans, required by COA to help ensure organization continuity and performance, particularly during times of shifting leadership and change. Executive Team members and many other senior leaders were asked to complete this process.

Overall, the Department remains on target to achieve COA accreditation by the summer of 2024.

STAFFING PROGRESS

The Department continues its focus on backfilling existing vacancies, with an emphasis on filling vacant frontline positions. The Department currently has 624 FTEs, compared with 585 in October 2021, for a net gain of 39 employees.

The Department has 29 vacancies for social caseworkers in our Division of Family Services (please note, the Department recently renamed the social casework division from Family Service Units Division to Division of Family Services, or DFS). During the last reporting period, 40 social caseworker candidates were scheduled to take the civil service exam; however, only seven names were ultimately received. We are interviewing these candidates this month and anticipate five of the seven candidates to start employment at DCYF in mid-July.

The Department has 21 vacancies for child protective investigators. Four new investigators have been hired and will start in the month of July. The Department of Administration is in the process of scheduling the exam, and we anticipate receiving names in early Fall.

In attempt to help reduce the number of frontline vacancies, the Department will implement Public Law 2023-201, signed into law on June 21, 2023, which establishes a pilot process to expedite hiring for Social Caseworker II and Child Protective Investigator positions at the Department. The one-year pilot will commence on October 1, 2023.

In addition to these frontline vacancies, the Department has also repurposed three FTEs to support accreditation needs related to active contract management and workforce development. Two of these positions have been posted and are currently in the interview stage. The third position is pending budget approval.

The Department also continues to look at attrition; see Table 1 below. As of June 20, a total of 34 employees have left the Department in calendar year 2023.

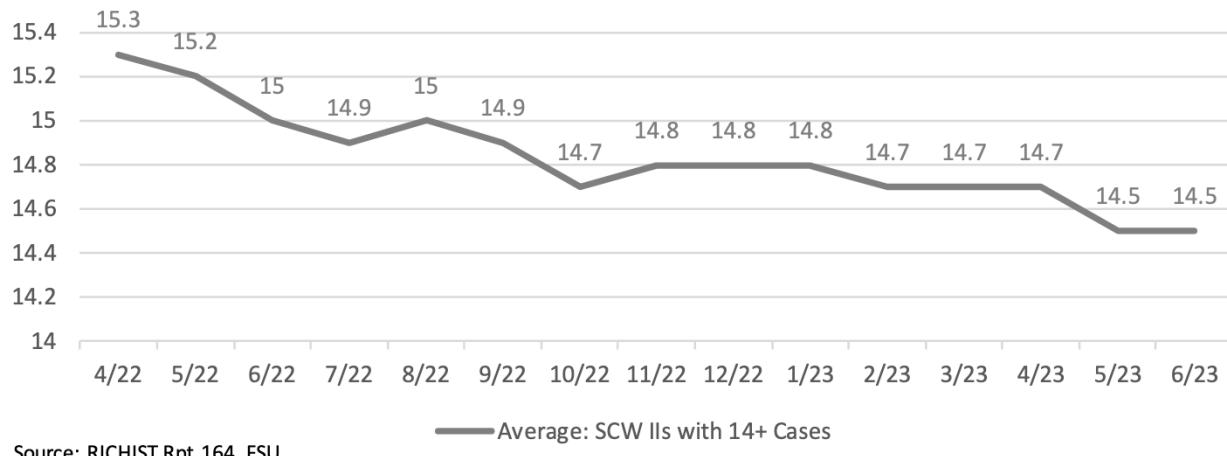
Table 1. Attrition of All DCYF Staff, by Calendar Year and Reason for Leaving

Reason for Leaving	Calendar Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bumped	0	0	3	0	1	0
Deceased	2	1	2	0	2	0
Failure to Pass Probation	7	1	1	0	0	0
Leave Return	0	1	0	4	1	1
Resignation	25	31	26	27	62	17
Retirement	16	18	20	24	5	6
Termination	4	5	7	5	10	3
Transfer In State	28	36	21	19	29	7
Transfer Out of State	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	84	93	80	79	110	34

CASELOAD INFORMATION

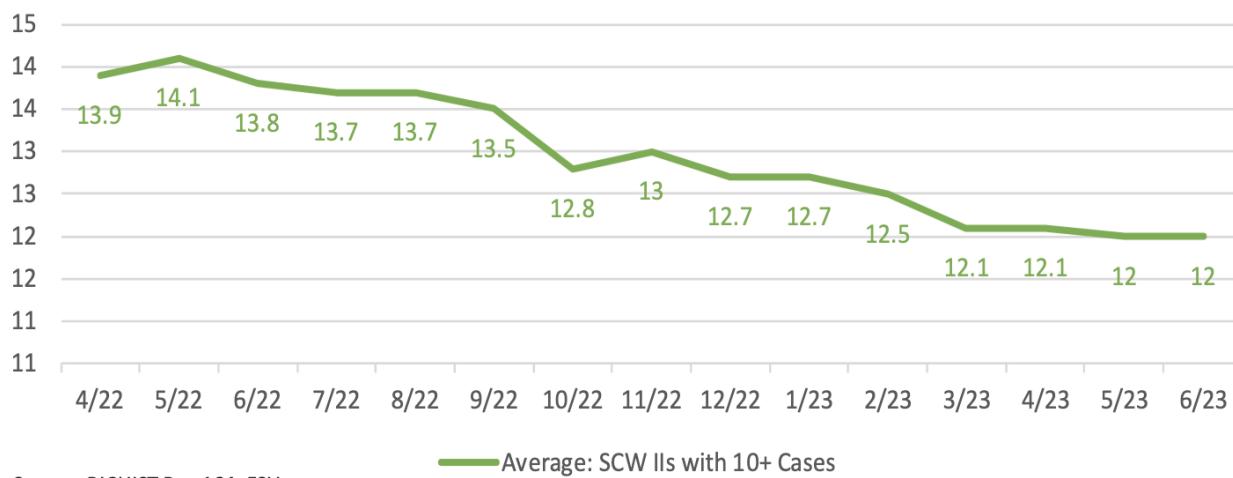
Figures 1 and 2 below show the average number of families (cases) assigned to a DFS caseworker, by Month. In Figure 1, only caseworkers carrying 14 or more cases are included in the calculation to exclude new workers still in training/probation or who are otherwise not carrying a full caseload. Figure 2 depicts caseworkers carrying 10 or more cases to include those nearing the end of their probation.

Figure 1. Average Number of Cases Assigned to DFS Caseworker, by Month (14+ Cases)



Source: RICHIST Rpt 164_FSU

Figure 2. Average Number of Cases Assigned to DFS Caseworker, by Month (10+ Cases)



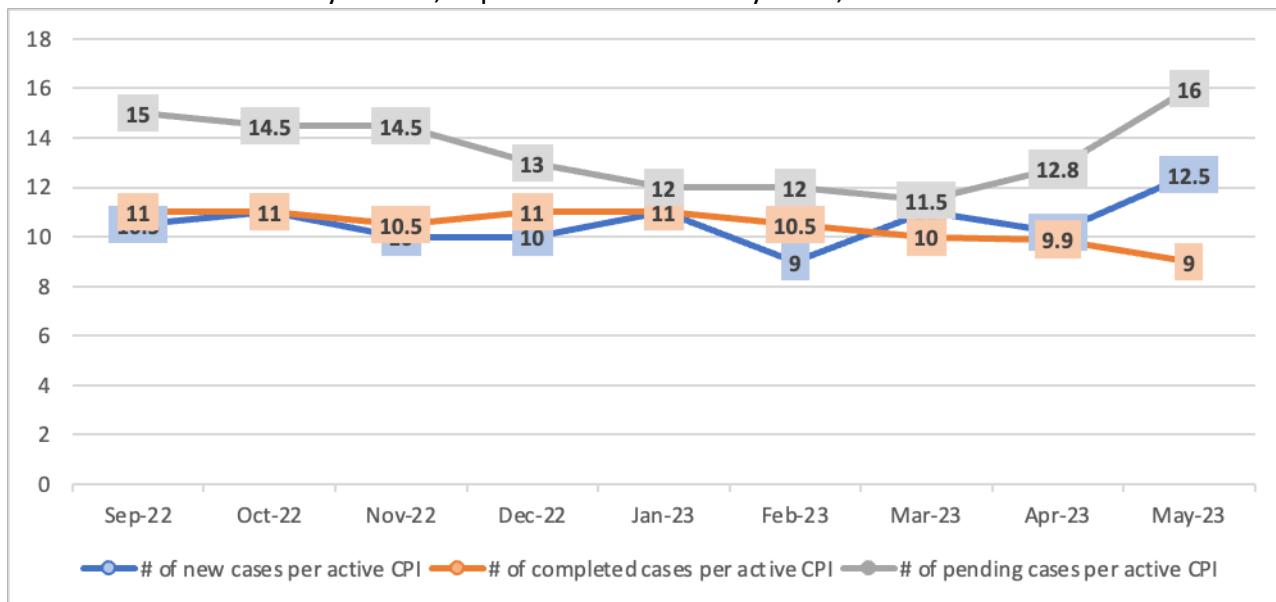
Source: RICHIST Rpt 164_FSU

As a comparison: on March 1, 2020, just prior to the pandemic, the Department had an average of 15.4 cases per caseworker (10+ chart); as of the beginning of June 2023, the Department was at 12.0 cases per caseworker. During the last reporting period, caseload sizes declined slightly, from 12.1 average cases to 12.0. Further decreases in caseload sizes are expected as the Department continues to fill its frontline vacancies.

COA's personnel standard suggests that a DFS 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 3 below shows that the Child Protective Services (CPS) investigators are receiving a median of 12.5 new investigations per month (blue line), which is an increase from the 10.5 cases as reported in the previous 60-day report. The median number of pending cases per child protective investigator (CPI) is 16.0 (grey line), which is an increase from the 11.5 as reported in the previous 60-day report.

Figure 3. Median caseloads (new, completed, and pending investigations per active CPI*), by month, September 2022 to May 2023, RI DCYF



Data notes: Source-RPT 259, 500

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

COA's personnel standard suggests that CPS investigators' 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.

As we continue to fill vacancies (see next steps below), the Department anticipates caseload reductions for both social caseworkers and child protective investigators in FY 24.

EXPENDITURES TO DATE

Table 2 below displays expenditures by statutory program from July 1, 2021, through the end of the reporting period. Table 3 breaks down accreditation costs by expenditure type for this same timeframe.

Table 2. Accreditation Expenditures by DCYF Statutory Program, SFY 2022 and SFY 2023

Program	Expenditures, in Dollars, Through 6/20/23
Central Management	662,001
Children's Behavioral Health	239,900
Child Welfare	13,358,785
Grand Total	14,260,686

Table 3. Accreditation Expenditures by DCYF Expenditure Type, SFY 2022 and SFY 2023

Expenditures Type	Expenditures, in Dollars, Through 6/20/23
Salary and Benefits	13,496,213
Contract Professional Services	2,500
Operating Supplies and Expenses	236,953
Capital Purchases and Equipment	525,022
Grand Total	14,260,686

NEXT STEPS

During the next reporting period, the Department expects to continue the Self Study, which is currently scheduled to conclude on December 18, 2023. Key activities toward completion will include:

- Finalizing the Department's policy review to ensure that the remainder of the year can be spent implementing program and practice changes as needed; and
- Submitting required changes to foster care regulations.

The Department also anticipates completing the Stakeholder Survey phase of accreditation during the next reporting period. Finalizing this step will include inviting a randomized group of birth parents and youth ages 14-21 to participate in the survey.

As stated above, the Department will also prepare to execute, beginning on October 1, its one-year pilot program for expedited civil service exams and hiring for Social Caseworker II and Child Protective Investigator positions at the Department.