

2023 Year in Review



Secretary Kristi Putnam

Arkansas Legislative Council

December 15, 2023

Top DHS Priorities

- Prevention, prevention, prevention!
- Medicaid Sustainability Review Process
- Behavioral Health Continuum of Care
- Improving Employee Experience

Expectations

Radical Honesty & Transparency

- Operating openly and honestly, taking full responsibility for our actions.

Collaboration, Encouragement, and Respect

- Seeking opportunities to strengthen team culture, partnerships, and communications

Trust and Grit

- Assuming the best intentions of others and demonstrating strength of character.

Passion and Dedication

- Constantly striving for excellence as we work to deliver best-in-class human services.

Proactive, Can-do Attitude

- Embodying a “figure it out” mentality; challenging the notion that “this can’t be done.”

Humility & Service

- Not worrying about who gets the credit! We work for the people, not the other way around.

DHS by the Numbers

As of 12/1/2023	
Total budget:	\$10,977,836,879 - Federal portion: \$8,046,982,694
Total # employees statewide:	6,546 - Facilities: 2,580 - Other areas: 3,966
County offices:	80 , plus one processing center
Youth placed in DYS custody:	375
Youth in foster care:	3,803
Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five Human Development Centers serving 848 residents• One psychiatric hospital serving 204 patients• One psychiatric nursing home serving 172 residents• Four juvenile treatment centers serving 301 youth

DHS by the Numbers

Arkansans receiving Medicaid benefits:

- Total: **884,951**
- ARHOME: **249,436**
- Other adults: **239,732**
- Children: **395,783**

Arkansans served by waiver programs:

- Community/Employment Support: **7,397**
- ARChoices: **10,037**
- Living Choices: **1,005**

Key Initiatives/Updates

- Unwinding the Public Health Emergency
- Medicaid Sustainability Review Process
- Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- Every Child Arkansas/foster care recommendations
- Combatting Human Trafficking
- Response to March 31 tornadoes
- Opportunities for Success Medicaid waiver
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families transition
- Workforce Cabinet
- Arkansas LEARNS – early childhood transition
- Adaptive work programs
- Leadership restructuring
- Partnerships across other agencies/cabinets

Meeting the Team



Medicaid Sustainability Review Process

- Comprehensive systemwide review of the entire Medicaid program
 - Includes expenditures, delivery systems, rates, etc.
 - Current state analysis expected first part of January 2024
- Identifying efficiencies, gaps, and potential reforms that will serve both beneficiaries and taxpayers



Unwinding the Public Health Emergency

Families First Coronavirus Response

- Passed in March 2020, this law required states to keep people who were no longer eligible on the Medicaid roles. Arkansas continued processing renewals and determining people ineligible but did not end their coverage.

Omnibus Bill

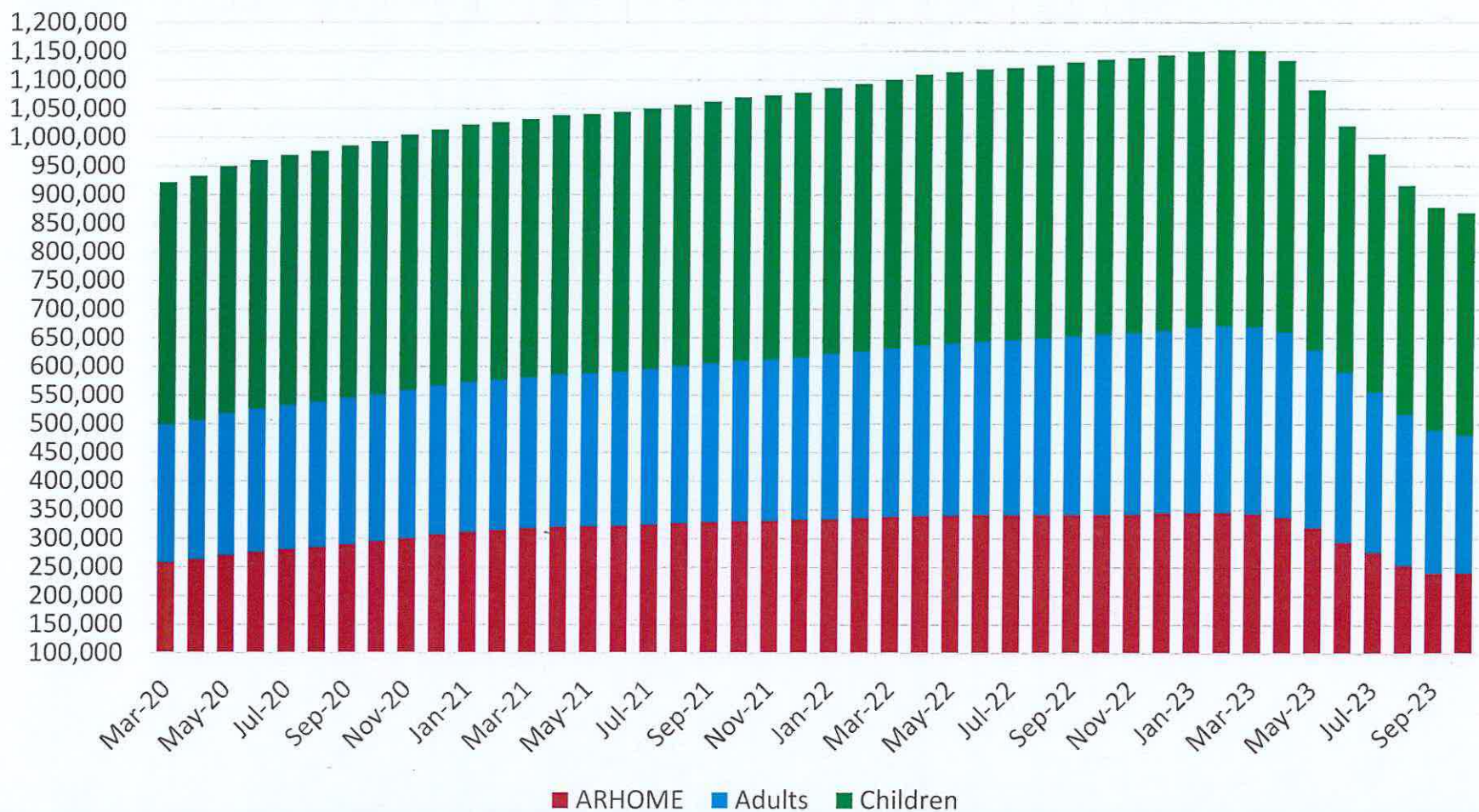
- In December 2022, President Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act ending the continuous enrollment condition for Medicaid and allowing states to return to normal operations as of April 1.

Act 780 of 2021

- Starting April 1, 2023, state law required DHS to complete within six months redeterminations of eligibility for anyone whose case had not been reviewed in last 12 months. This process was completed September 30, 2023.

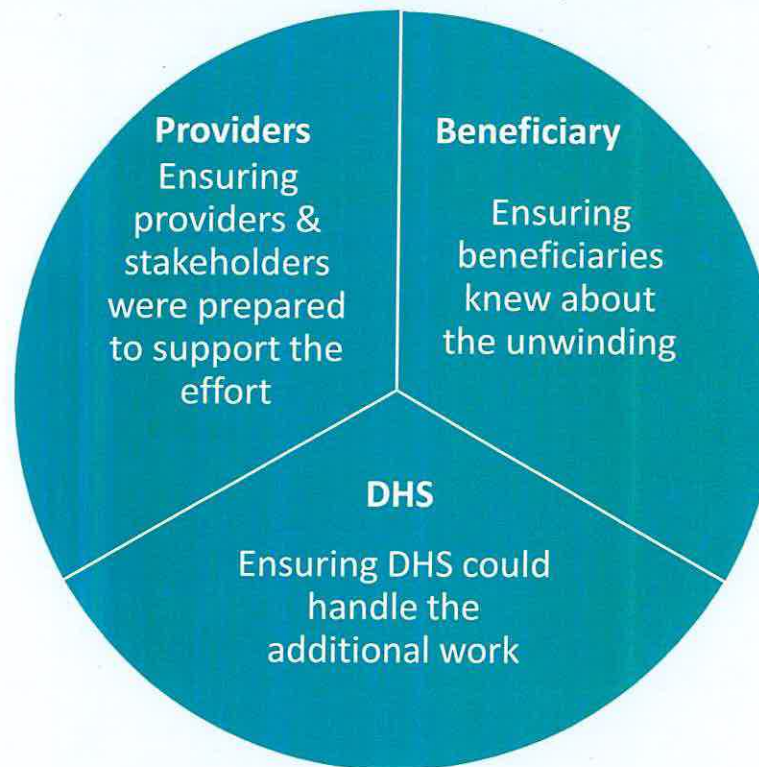
Impact on Enrollment

At its peak in March 2023, more than 420,000 enrollees remained covered by Medicaid even though they were ineligible or never provided information so DHS could determine their eligibility. At that time, enrollment growth in the programs during the PHE was 25.16%.



Preparation for Unwinding

- ✓ Beneficiary lists
- ✓ Weekly calls
- ✓ Outreach toolkits
- ✓ Outreach grants
- ✓ State agency support



- ✓ Address updates
- ✓ Renewals and reminder notices sent
- ✓ New federal strategies
- ✓ Paid advertising
- ✓ Digital campaigns
- ✓ Texts, emails, alerts
- ✓ Partnerships with community organizations
- ✓ Expanded outreach
- ✓ Enhanced program support

- ✓ Contracted surge support
- ✓ Streamlined processes
- ✓ Cross-divisional work to support eligibility determinations

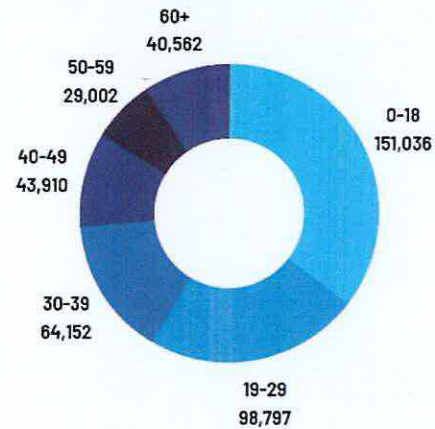
Factors Impacting Eligibility Outcomes

DHS was not surprised by the number of people who did not respond - called procedural terminations - because many knew they no longer were eligible and chose not to return their renewal forms.

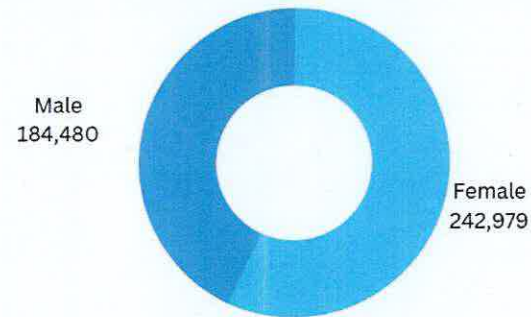
- Arkansas is experiencing record-low unemployment and a rate significantly lower than when the pandemic began. In March 2020, the unemployment rate in Arkansas was 4.9 percent. In October 2023, it was 3.1 percent.
- Arkansas increased the minimum wage twice during the pandemic, likely resulting in many beneficiaries being over income.
- CMS required some states to pause disenrollments or to reinstate some beneficiaries because of issues surrounding their processes, including those tied to procedural disenrollments. Arkansas is **not** one of these states.

Demographics

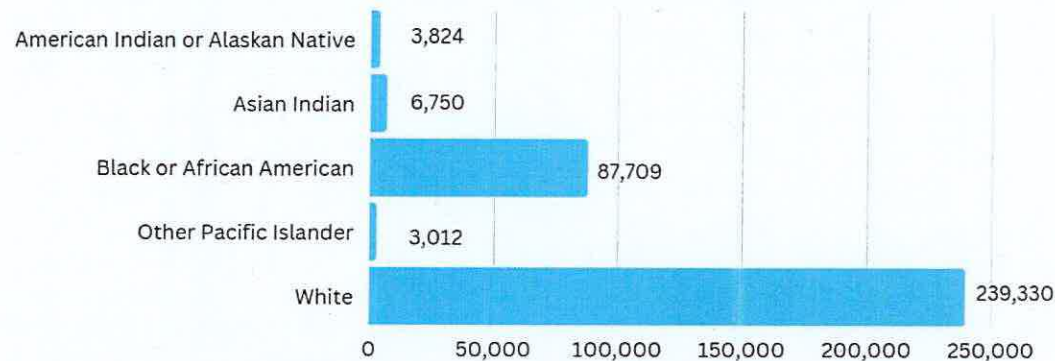
CLOSURES BY AGE



CLOSURES BY GENDER



CLOSURES BY RACE



The figures above reflect cases where a single race was reported.
There were 13,838 cases where two or more races were reported.
There were also 72,996 cases where race was not reported.

Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

The new Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (OSAMH) within the Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services supports programs and projects to address behavioral health issues across all DHS divisions, and ensure that programs and funding are being used to best meet the needs of Arkansans.

Areas of focus include:

- Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services
- Mental Health Treatment Services
- Forensic Services
- State Drug Director
- Prevention and Early Intervention Services
- Strategic Grant Planning/Implementation



Opportunities for Success

- New approach to a work component for individuals in expanded Medicaid.
- Establishes an optional workforce development program within Medicaid.
- Designed to create meaningful ways for beneficiaries to move to economic independence.
- Beneficiaries who choose not to participate in the workforce development component would keep Medicaid coverage but would be moved from a qualified health plan to traditional fee-for-service Medicaid.
- Awaiting approval from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).



Every Child Arkansas

Every Child Arkansas (ECA) is a partnership between nearly 30 organizations who together bring a focused approach to recruiting and supporting foster parents

Governor Sanders' Executive Order 23-18 established a working group comprised of ECA, the Department of Human Services, Department of Public Safety, and the Department of Education on a working group that recommended reforms that support the foster care system and keep children safe.



More than enough homes for
children across Arkansas

Foster care recommendations

The working group's recommendations include:

- Developing a new community resource model to strengthen and support at risk families
- Providing crisis responses services available to youth and families
- Strengthening the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) workforce
- Establishing a team to implement high-quality trauma-informed care training
- Redesigning the training and requirements for foster parents and DCFS staff
- Continuing a partnership with Every Child Arkansas to recruit, open, support, and retain foster homes.



Foster care working group released 11 recommendations to better Arkansas' foster care system

by Madison Hardcastle, Cory Evans | Mon, September 18th 2023, 2:13 PM CDT

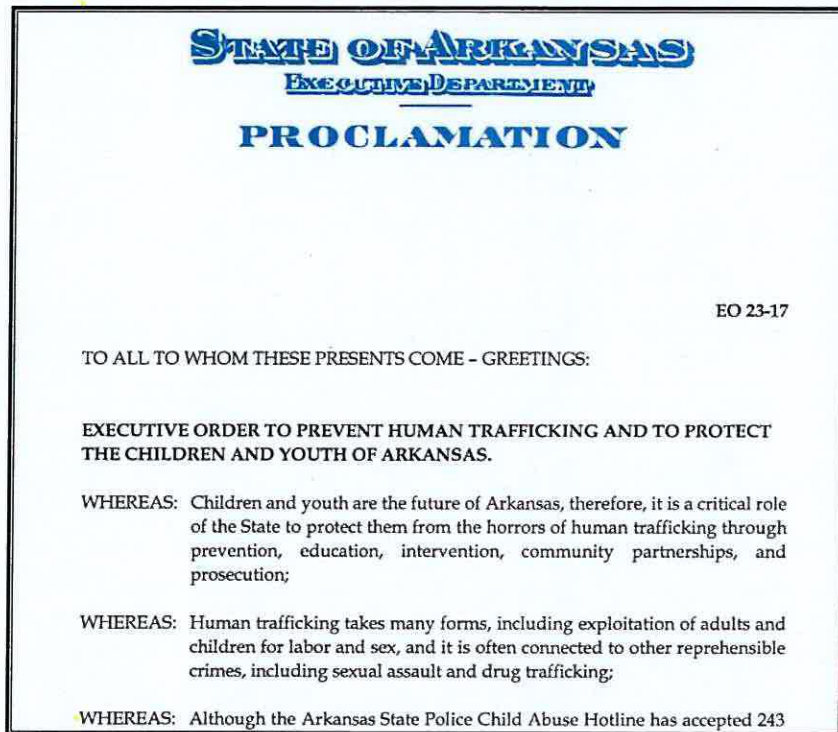


The foster care working group announced their 11 recommendations Monday for the improvement of Arkansas' foster care system. (Photo KATV)



LITTLE ROCK (KATV) — The foster care working group announced their 11 recommendations Monday for improving Arkansas' foster care system.

Combating Human Trafficking



Coordinated with the Governor's Office to launch an integrated approach to eliminate human trafficking in Arkansas and support victims under Governor Sanders' Executive Order 23-17. A working group we led submitted recommendations that include:

- Implementing an evidence-based screening tool to identify human trafficking victims
- Updating training and educational materials
- Revising data, information sharing, and state protocols to better serve victims

TANF transfer to DHS

DHS worked with the Department of Commerce (DOC) to move the administration and management of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from the Division of Workforce Services within DOC to DHS, where we are working to align TANF resources with existing programs that provide wraparound services to vulnerable populations and leverage the opportunity to streamline these operations.



**ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN
SERVICES**

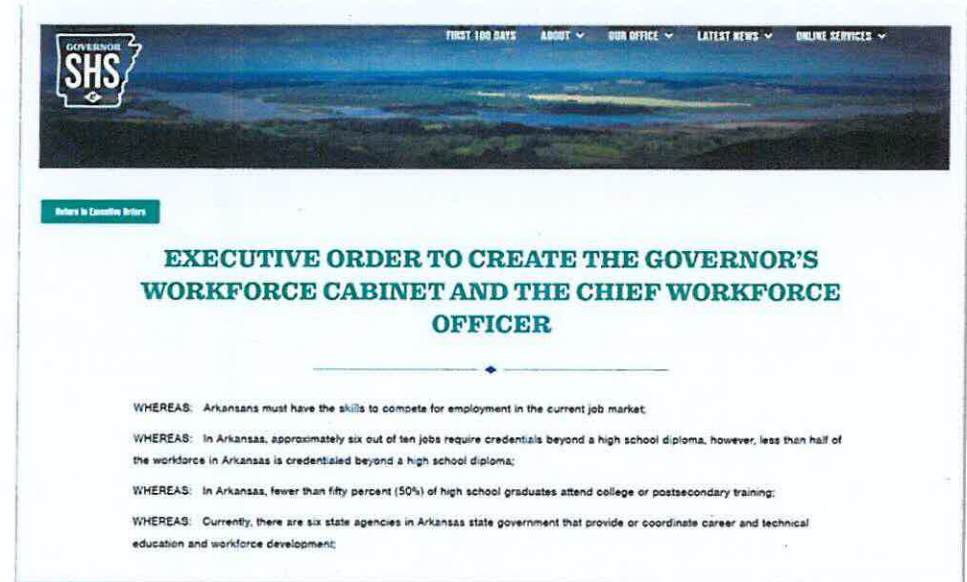
Arkansas LEARNS & Early Childhood transfer



Prioritized efforts outlined by Gov. Sanders' Executive Order 23-08 on the Literacy, Empowerment, Accountability, Readiness, Networking, and School Safety (LEARNS) by collaborating with partners at the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to shift early childhood programs within DHS to ADE and better align quality early education and childcare support for families.

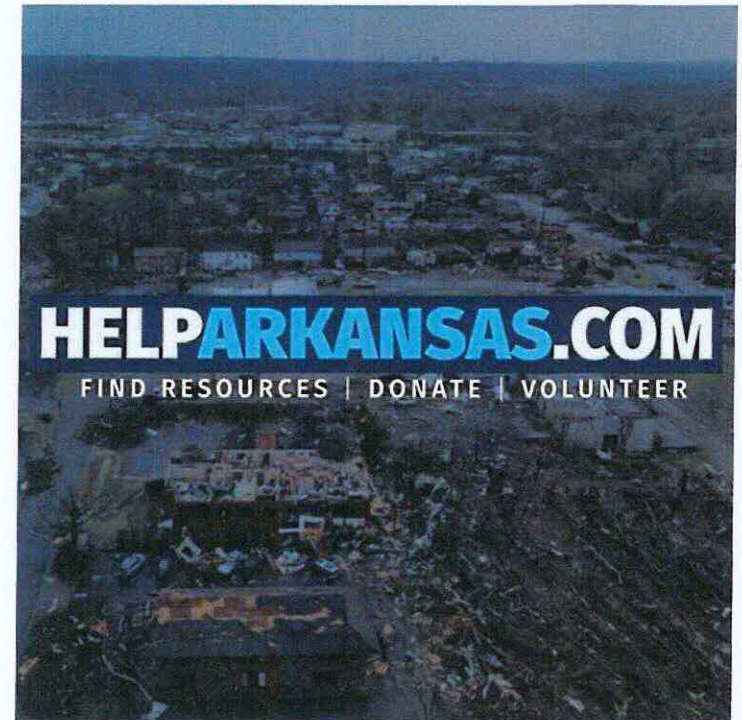
Workforce Cabinet

Joined leaders from the Departments of Commerce, Corrections, Education, Labor and Licensing, Veterans Affairs, and Transformation & Shared Services on a new Workforce Cabinet established by Gov. Sanders' Executive Order 23-16. This initiative is a cross-agency focus on maximizing effectiveness and efficiency of workforce development and career readiness programs.



Tornado response

Coordinated with State and Federal partners to assist with recovery from the March 31 tornadoes that hit Pulaski, Lonoke, and Cross Counties, ensuring that counseling services and programs providing food and shelter assistance were readily available to Arkansans in need in the immediate aftermath of the tornadoes as well as in the near- and long-term future.



Adaptive work programs



Implemented Families at Work and Infants at Work pilot programs that support DHS employees by allowing flexibilities to bring children to many worksites, and created opportunities for qualifying employees to work remotely or shift to an alternate four-day, 10-hour-a-day work schedule.

Leadership restructuring



**Janet
Mann**

Deputy Secretary
for Programs and
Medicaid Director



**Misty
Eubanks**

Deputy Secretary
for Operations
and Budget



**Melissa
Weatherton**

Director of
Specialty Medicaid
Services

DHS: We Do Hard Suff!

Questions?

Find Us On...



@ArkansasDHS



@ArkansasDHS



@ArkansasDHS



Arkansas Department
of Human Services



ARHumanServices



ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF
**HUMAN
SERVICES**

humanservices.arkansas.gov