



# **ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

## **Division of Children and Family Services**

### **Agency Overview:**

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) works to ensure safety and stable homes for children and youth of all ages and to strengthen families. The Division, which is comprised of more than a thousand employees across 10 service areas throughout the state, works alongside national and local partners to respectfully engage children and youth, families, and communities to prevent and protect from child abuse and neglect, provide safety and stability through foster care, and permanence through reunification, adoption, and other services.

### **Federal Oversight:**

DCFS operates under federal oversight to ensure compliance with child welfare laws and to ensure the safety and well-being of children. The federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a key federal partner, conducts reviews of state activity relative to the work performed by DCFS. When those reviews identify areas for improvement, DCFS is charged with development and implementation of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP)<sup>1</sup> to address those concerns and to maintain federal funding. This oversight helps DCFS to review and improve current practices; improve outcomes; and ensures accountability within the Division.

### **Vision:**

Every Child has a safe and stable family every day.

### **DCFS Priorities:**

The Division has collaboratively designed a framework to guide the top three priorities of the agency:

1. Safely stabilize and preserve families.
2. Safely care for children and quickly reunify children with their family of origin. If children must be removed from the home, relative and fictive kin caregivers will be considered first and throughout the entire engagement with the family.
3. Safely support child permanency, well-being, and development of culturally safe, lifelong relationships.

### **DCFS Services:**

The Child Abuse Hotline is operated by Arkansas State Police Crimes Against Children Division (CACD).

- Total Number of Calls to the Hotline: **59,273**
- Accepted Reports: **32,574**
  - Assigned to DCFS: **26,407**
    - Differential Response (DR): **5,945**
      - “Differential Response” allows DCFS to respond to reports of child maltreatment based on the level of risk. High risk cases receive investigations, while lower risk cases get supportive assessments focused on connecting families to services without court involvement.
    - Child Maltreatment Investigation: **20,642**

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<sup>1</sup> For example, DCFS is currently under a Title IV-E performance improvement plan.

- Assigned to CACD **6,167**
- Historically, 20% of all child maltreatment investigations are found **to be true**<sup>2</sup> for abuse or neglect.

Once a call is accepted at the Child Abuse Hotline the child maltreatment report is either assigned as priority I or priority II. Priority level is determined by the specific facts of the allegation. DCFS has forty-five days to complete the child maltreatment investigation.

### **Services by Case Type Upon Completion of the Child Maltreatment Investigation:**

#### **Prevention Case (formerly Supportive Service):**

- Providing services in the home to children and families to support a family.
  - 456 cases opened at the end of SFY 2025
  - Total cases in one year: 1,541

#### **In-Home:**

- In-Home cases are opened upon a TRUE finding of child maltreatment.
  - 1506 cases opened at the end of SFY 2025
  - Total cases in one year: 3,130
    - Involving 7,916 children and youth.

For these case types, DCFS has five (5) business days to contact the family and identify appropriate services available and to complete the necessary service referrals or to connect the family to community partners. These decisions are unique and driven by the needs of the family and the reason for the Division's involvement.

Common Services for these cases include "Triple P" (Positive Parenting Program), Intensive In-Home Services, SafeCare, 100 Families, WIC (Women Infant and Children), Baby and Me, and CarePortal.

#### Success In-Home:

- Access to evidence-based prevention services allows children and youth to remain in their communities safely.
- Re-victimization rates remain low for children and youth one-year post-DCFS involvement. In SFY 25 = 7%.

#### **Foster Care:**

Foster care is a temporary living arrangement for children who cannot safely remain with their biological parents due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. It is the most restrictive option. The primary goal of foster care is to ensure each child's safety and well-being while working toward a permanent solution, which may include reunification with their biological family, adoption, or another planned arrangement. Once a child or youth enters foster care, the Division assumes responsibility.

- At the end of SFY 2025, there were 3,390 children and youth in foster care.
- Top three entry reasons: Neglect (51%), Substance Abuse (41%), or Parent Incarceration (22%)
  - NOTE: A child can enter foster care for more than one reason.

#### Success in Foster Care:

- First Placement with relatives or fictive kin: 42.4%

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<sup>2</sup> "True" means a determination when the allegation of child maltreatment is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

- 43% of children and youth experiencing foster care achieve reunification with parents or caretakers.
- 30% of the children and youth achieve permanency through adoption with a relative, foster parent or through recruitment.
- There are less than 200 children and youth available for adoption which is significantly lower than surrounding states. This is due to DCFS' strategic partnership with Project Zero.
- Arkansas remains below the national average on re-entry into foster care within 12 months of permanency.

### **Barriers to Services:**

DCFS has a shortage in resource homes available for sibling groups and older youth. This results in those individuals being housed outside of familiar surroundings in their communities. Unfortunately, this also leads to lack of consistent family time and extensive travel for those individuals. Lack of access to services, such as substance abuse treatment and mental health services, in rural areas also creates a significant barrier for the Division.

### **Workforce:**

- Average Workload (June 2025): 17.0 cases. Note, the workload has improved within the last few months as staffing has returned to appropriate levels.
- Caseloads are generally counted per household, unless it involves foster care, in which each child is counted individually as a case.
  - Each Investigation, In-Home case (no children in foster care), or Differential Response = 1 case
  - Foster Care cases are counted per child, not per household
    - Each child in foster care = 1 case

### **Turnover:**

DCFS continues to experience significant challenges with staff turnover. Turnover impacts caseload management and service delivery. High turnover rates can result in increased caseloads for remaining staff which can lead to difficulties in maintaining timely and consistent case management. DCFS has though made efforts to impact turnover for our frontline staff. There has been an approximate 19% improvement in turnover for frontline family service workers since SFY22. Currently, the Division is focused on improving new staff training for both the supervisors and the frontline workers.

### **Agency Revenue:**

The annual operating budget for DCFS is \$281,961, 891.00. DCFS's funding mix is 48% federal, 47% state general revenue, and 5% Other.

### **Expense Breakdown:**

Thirty percent of the Budget is for Salaries and Fringe and 12.7% for Maintenance and Operations (M&O) including Professional Contracts. DCFS spends the remaining budget on supporting clients in care, adoptive services, and family support.

### **Rental Expenses:**

DCFS pays a direct rental payment of approximately \$750,000 annually for its space in the DHS central office complex. DCFS has cost allocation on grants to the Division of County Operations (DCO) to cover rental spaces in the county offices of about \$18,000 annually. DCFS rents two (2) storage units to hold items that belong to foster children or to store items needed to care for children and families at a cost of about \$1,300 per year. DCFS also pays approximately \$157,000 annually for CACD offices in the county offices.

**APPENDIX:****Revenues:**

	<b>Amount Certified</b>	<b>Percent of Revenue</b>	<b>SF2025 Funded Budget</b>
Federal Revenue	137,536,468.00	48%	137,536,468.00
Other Revenue	14,917,704.00	5%	14,917,704.00
State General Revenue	139,333,393.00	49%	139,333,393.00
SGR Transfers Out	(6,825,674.00)	-2%	(6,825,674.00)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>284,961,891.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>284,961,891.00</b>

**Agency Expenditures:**

<b>G/L Category</b>	<b>SFY2025 Expenses</b>
Personnel	81,536,162
Board Payments	70,268,619
Comprehensive Residential Treatment	7,823,144
Contracts	58,559,995
FC Expense	6,884,127
Information Technology (IT)	12,125,669
Maint & Operations	8,257,019
Professional Services	14,815,703
Vehicles	423,965
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>260,694,404</b>

**Salaries and Fringe:**

<b>Position:</b>	<b>Total:</b>
Frontline Workers	53,364,983
Frontline Supervisors	15,762,295
Area Directors and Program	
Administrators	3,299,808
Division Leadership/Program	
Management/Oversight	9,109,076
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>81,536,162</b>