

**Caseload Report for County Legal Operations: Child Welfare Cases
Office of Chief Counsel**

4th Quarter Report, SFY 2017-2018

Introduction

The Office of Chief Counsel's County Legal Operations section (CLO) represents the Arkansas Department of Human Services ("the Department") in child welfare and adult protective services cases and appeals from such cases. CLO also represents the Department in administrative hearings involving the placement of individuals on the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and the Arkansas Adult Maltreatment Central Registry where the individual challenges the Department's true finding of maltreatment and is represented by an attorney, as well as appeals of administrative hearings to circuit courts and appellate courts.

As part of CLO's representation in child welfare cases, CLO attorneys represent the Department in dependency-neglect cases held before circuit courts across the state. CLO attorneys also provide legal services related to family-in-need-of-services cases where a circuit court orders a juvenile into the custody of the Department or otherwise orders the Department to provide services. The numbers presented in this section include dependency-neglect and family-in-need-of-services cases in which a CLO attorney is involved.

CLO Attorneys and Staff

CLO employs 54 attorneys, 3 legal services specialists, and 28 legal support specialists. The attorneys consist of the Deputy Counsel who manages the CLO section, 1 Assistant Deputy Counsel, 4 attorney supervisors, 3 appellate attorneys, and 45 field attorneys. The Assistant Deputy Counsel is the operational liaison between CLO and the Department’s Division of Children and Family Services and Adult Protective Services unit.

The field attorneys are housed with their legal staff in 19 county offices around the state. The field attorneys and their legal staff cover cases in all 75 counties.

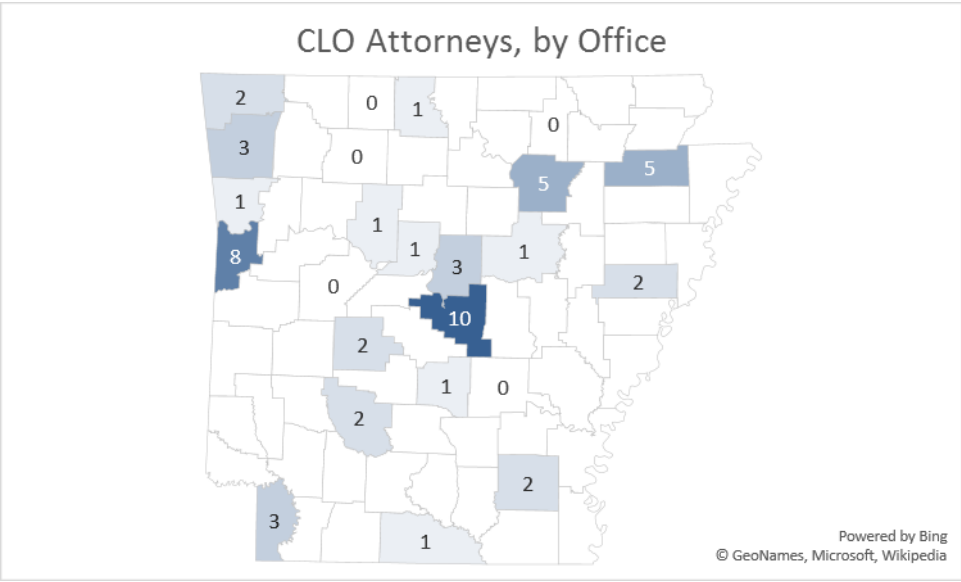


Figure 1

Number of Pending Child Welfare Cases

During the 4th quarter of state fiscal year 2017-2018 (SFY18), the number of child welfare cases decreased from 3,229 to 3,062. This represents a net loss of 167 cases, or 5.17%. The loss corresponds to 444 cases opened, 588 cases closed, and a correction of 23 cases that were confirmed as closed, but not reflected in previous closed-case reports.

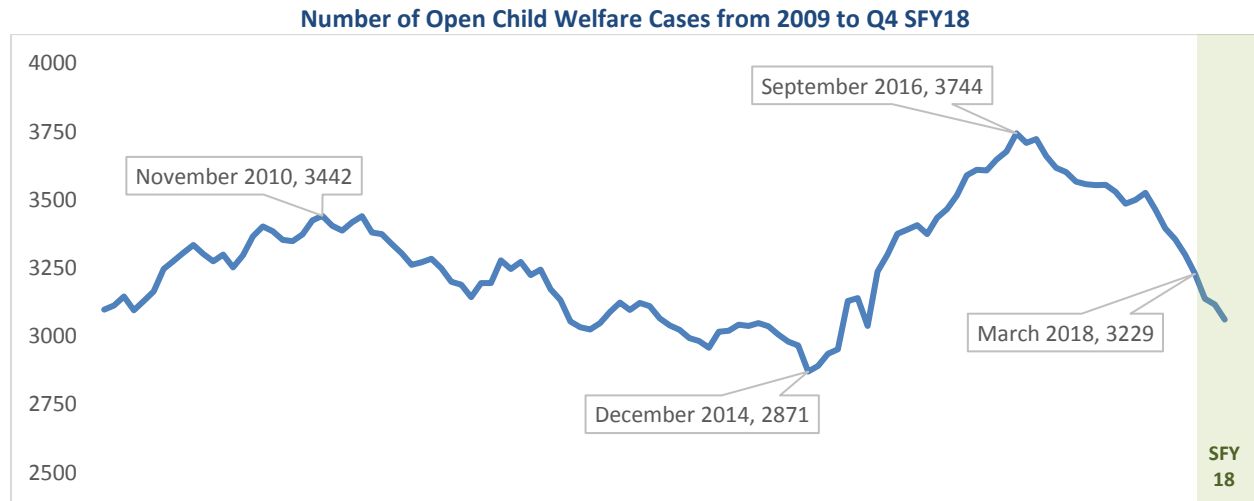


Figure 2.

Since January 2009, the number of child welfare cases has *decreased* from 3,098 at the end of January 2009 to 3,062 at the end of June 2018, which represents a net loss of 35 cases, or 0.12%. During the same period, the average number of child welfare cases was approximately 3,272. By comparison, the average number of child welfare cases open during the 4th quarter of SFY18 was approximately 3,106.

N.B. OCC does not have a comprehensive case management or reporting system. Consequently, OCC began an audit program in August 2016 to hand count each caseload at least once per year to ensure the accuracy of the reported caseload numbers and the consistency of those numbers month-to-month. Since August 2016, the audit reduced the number of reported cases by a net of 252 cases, which explains *Figure 2's* bend in the number of child welfare cases during SFY18 to date relative to the number of cases opened and closed illustrated in *Figure 3* below.

Number of Opened and Closed Child Welfare Cases Per Month

As of the end of the 4th quarter of SFY18, the number of cases opened per month averaged 148 and the number of cases closed per month averaged 196. The 4th quarter, therefore, had a net average closure of approximately 48 cases per month with the number of cases opened ranging from 135 to 170 cases per month and the number of cases closed ranging from 181 to 219 cases per month.

The average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 was substantially lower than the average number of cases opened from January 2009 to June 2018, but the average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18 was substantially higher than the average number of cases closed from January 2009 to June 2018.

Specifically, the average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (148) was 17.43% lower than the average number of cases opened from January 2009 to June 2018 (179.25). The average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (196) was 10.28% higher than the average number of cases closed from January 2009 to June 2018 (177.73).

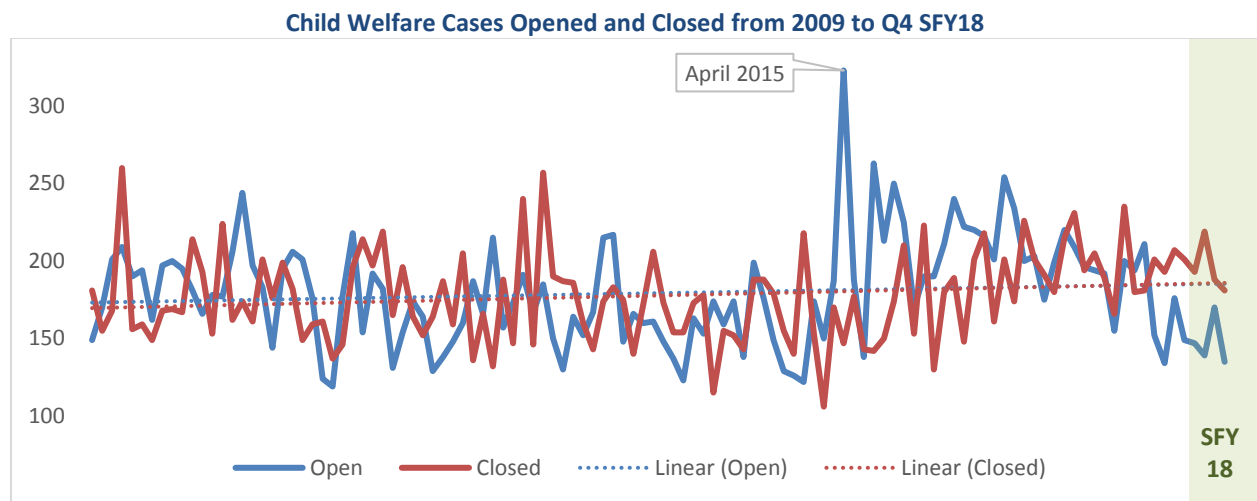


Figure 3

Although the available data do not yet support any conclusions to explain the changes in the number of opened and closed cases from January 2009 to June 2018, the data is helpful in describing the nature of the changes in the number of child welfare cases that have occurred over time.

For example, the average numbers of opened and closed cases during the 4th quarter of SFY18 are particularly helpful when compared to the averages during two specific preceding periods: (1) the period from December 2014 to September 2016 during which CLO experienced 21 months of nearly uninterrupted growth in the total number of child welfare cases (“the sustained-growth period”), and (2) the period from October 2016 to June 2017 during which CLO experienced 9 months of nearly uninterrupted decline in the total number of child welfare cases (“the sustained-decrease period”).

N.B. The decline that started during the sustained-decrease period continued through the 1st through 4th quarters of SFY18 as well, which constitutes now 18 months of nearly uninterrupted decline in the total number of child welfare cases.



Comparing the Sustained-growth and Sustained-decline Periods to the 4th Quarter of SFY18.

The average number of cases opened and closed from December 2014 to September 2016 was substantially higher than the average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 and substantially lower than the average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18. Specifically, the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 (208.23) was 40.70% higher than the average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (148). Likewise, the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016 (171.27) was 12.62% lower than the average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (196).

The average number of cases opened and closed from October 2016 to June 2017 was also substantially higher than the average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 and slightly higher than the average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18. Specifically, the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 (198.67) was 34.24% higher than the average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (148). Likewise, the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 (203.56) was 3.86% higher than the average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (196).



Comparing the Sustained-decline Period to the Sustained-growth Period.

The average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 was lower than the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 while the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 was substantially higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016. Specifically, the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 (198.67) was 4.59% lower than the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 (208.23). By contrast, the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 (203.56) was 18.85% higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016 (171.27).



Comparing the 4th Quarter of SFY18 to the Sustained-growth and Sustained-decline Periods.

The average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 was substantially lower than the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 and the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016. Specifically, the average number of cases opened during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (148) was 25.5% lower than the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 (198.67) and 28.92% lower than the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 (208.23).

The average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18 was slightly lower than the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017, but substantially higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016. Specifically, the average number of cases closed during the 4th quarter of SFY18 (196) was 3.71% lower than the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 (203.56), but 14.44% higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016 (171.27).

Child Welfare Cases: April 2018, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	15	1	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ashley	10	20	2	3	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	33	2	2	5	21	2	0	0	0	0	0
Benton	19W	105	8	9	4	55	4	0	1	0	2	0
Boone	14	41	3	5	3	26	2	0	2	0	0	4
Bradley	10	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	20	1	2	2	10	4	0	0	0	1	2
Chicot	10	12	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clark	9E	14	1	2	1	9	2	0	0	0	0	0
Clay	2	12	1	4	1	12	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cleburne	16	26	1	2	3	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleveland	13	5	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	20	1	2	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conway	15	45	2	1	2	7	0	0	1	0	1	0
Craighead	2	78	2	11	5	48	3	0	1	0	2	2
Crawford	21	79	3	5	3	26	1	0	1	0	1	4
Crittenden	2	66	5	1	2	28	4	0	1	0	0	1
Cross	1	25	1	2	2	11	2	0	0	0	1	0
Dallas	13	7	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	0
Desha	10	10	1	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drew	10	25	2	1	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	86	3	8	4	31	3	0	0	0	2	0
Franklin	5	21	2	4	3	10	1	0	0	0	2	0
Fulton	16	24	0	3	1	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Garland	18E	79	9	8	5	36	4	0	0	0	3	4
Grant	7	18	1	1	3	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green	2	90	4	16	5	55	11	0	2	0	3	0
Hempstead	8N	13	3	1	1	8	0	0	0	0	1	0
Hot Spring	7	39	3	3	3	19	1	0	4	0	2	0
Howard	9W	7	0	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	49	2	1	4	22	3	0	1	0	0	0
Izard	16	31	3	0	1	10	3	0	3	0	0	0
Jackson	3	51	3	0	4	17	2	0	0	0	0	0
Jefferson	11W	67	5	5	5	29	3	0	3	0	1	2
Johnson	5	30	2	2	4	13	3	0	1	0	0	0
Lafayette	8S	7	2	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	24	0	2	1	12	0	0	2	0	0	0
Lee	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	4	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Little River	9W	16	3	2	4	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	51	4	3	4	16	0	0	3	0	1	0
Lonoke	23	94	1	0	5	25	3	0	0	0	0	0
Madison	4	34	2	2	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	0
Marion	14	13	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	8S	56	3	5	6	28	3	0	2	0	0	0
Mississippi	2	55	2	1	2	19	8	0	0	0	0	0
Monroe	1	9	0	1	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	7	1	2	1	8	2	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	4	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ouachita	13	25	1	2	2	14	1	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	9	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	33	1	3	2	10	2	0	0	0	0	0
Pike	9W	12	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	63	2	8	1	21	0	0	1	0	1	1
Polk	18W	23	0	1	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pope	5	35	1	2	4	22	5	0	0	0	1	0
Prairie	17	3	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	295	6	18	31	105	8	0	11	0	5	4
Randolph	3	29	3	2	3	13	1	0	0	0	2	0
Saline	22	34	1	6	4	21	3	0	4	0	0	0
Scott	15	22	0	0	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Searcy	20	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	367	7	17	25	154	17	0	10	0	2	3
Sevier	9W	25	1	0	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp	3	40	5	5	4	31	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Francis	1	24	0	1	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	16	1	3	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union	13	41	1	4	2	26	2	0	0	0	2	0
Van Buren	20	12	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	4	232	8	10	22	81	13	0	4	1	3	3
White	17	80	4	8	7	36	5	0	1	0	1	0
Woodruff	1	22	0	0	1	9	3	0	1	0	0	0
Yell	15	37	0	0	3	8	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals		3,138	139	219	243	1,371	142	0	62	1	42	33

Child Welfare Cases: May 2018, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ashley	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	36	5	2	3	11	0	0	1	0	0	0
Benton	19W	112	14	8	5	64	6	0	4	0	2	2
Boone	14	42	4	3	5	23	0	0	2	0	1	1
Bradley	10	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	20	2	2	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chicot	10	12	1	1	1	7	1	0	0	0	1	0
Clark	9E	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clay	2	14	2	0	2	9	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cleburne	16	28	2	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleveland	13	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	20	1	1	2	14	2	0	0	0	0	0
Conway	15	37	0	8	3	20	2	0	1	0	1	0
Craighead	2	74	2	6	3	31	0	0	0	0	3	3
Crawford	21	72	2	9	5	48	4	0	0	0	1	5
Crittenden	2	67	6	5	1	18	2	0	0	0	0	0
Cross	1	27	5	3	2	17	1	0	1	0	0	0
Dallas	13	5	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Desha	10	10	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	1
Drew	10	25	0	1	1	14	2	0	0	0	0	1
Faulkner	20	85	3	4	4	44	6	0	4	0	2	2
Franklin	5	20	2	3	4	17	3	0	0	0	2	0
Fulton	16	23	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Garland	18E	74	3	8	5	29	5	0	5	0	4	5
Grant	7	17	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green	2	97	8	1	2	29	3	0	1	0	0	0
Hempstead	8N	13	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	41	2	0	5	20	3	0	3	0	0	1
Howard	9W	7	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	50	3	2	5	28	5	0	4	0	0	1
Izard	16	31	0	0	1	11	1	0	1	0	0	0
Jackson	3	47	3	7	3	42	4	0	1	0	0	2
Jefferson	11W	65	2	4	7	30	5	0	1	0	0	1
Johnson	5	32	2	0	3	13	2	0	1	0	0	0
Lafayette	8S	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	23	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lee	1	8	2	0	1	11	1	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	16	1	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	50	0	1	4	16	2	0	3	0	1	0
Lonoke	23	102	9	1	7	32	3	0	5	0	0	0
Madison	4	33	1	2	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
Marion	14	12	0	1	2	8	1	0	0	0	1	0
Miller	8S	54	1	3	3	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	2	57	9	7	2	26	2	0	0	0	0	0
Monroe	1	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	5	1	0	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
Ouachita	13	22	2	5	3	14	5	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Phillips	1	33	0	0	2	16	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pike	9W	12	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	61	3	5	1	21	2	0	0	0	0	3
Polk	18W	21	0	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	1
Pope	5	35	1	1	5	7	0	0	0	0	1	0
Prairie	17	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	279	9	21	26	70	1	0	6	0	15	1
Randolph	3	29	1	1	2	12	2	0	2	0	0	0
Saline	22	35	3	2	2	6	0	0	1	0	1	0
Scott	15	22	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Searcy	20	6	1	0	2	4	1	0	2	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	352	4	18	27	100	7	0	12	0	11	2
Sevier	9W	24	2	3	2	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp	3	44	4	0	3	32	6	0	2	0	3	0
St. Francis	1	30	6	1	3	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	17	1	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union	13	40	1	2	2	13	1	0	3	0	0	0
Van Buren	20	14	2	0	3	7	1	0	1	0	0	0
Washington	4	239	17	10	32	93	9	0	5	0	5	7
White	17	77	9	11	11	52	5	0	3	0	1	0
Woodruff	1	22	0	0	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	37	1	1	4	11	1	0	1	0	2	0
Totals		3,117	170	188	247	1,226	117	0	77	0	59	42

Child Welfare Cases: June 2018, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	16	2	1	1	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ashley	10	20	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	36	1	1	2	10	0	0	0	0	1	0
Benton	19W	106	6	12	6	60	11	0	1	0	2	7
Boone	14	39	1	3	1	11	0	0	0	0	1	2
Bradley	10	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	3	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	18	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chicot	10	10	0	2	1	7	1	0	0	0	1	0
Clark	9E	11	1	4	1	7	1	0	0	0	3	0
Clay	2	15	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleburne	16	31	4	1	2	15	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cleveland	13	5	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	20	1	1	2	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
Conway	15	33	1	2	2	10	0	0	1	0	0	0
Craighead	2	74	4	4	3	31	3	0	0	0	3	1
Crawford	21	72	3	3	3	26	2	0	1	0	0	3
Crittenden	2	70	6	3	2	26	12	0	2	0	1	0
Cross	1	22	0	5	1	15	1	0	1	0	0	0
Dallas	13	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desha	10	7	0	3	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	1
Drew	10	24	0	1	1	14	2	0	0	0	0	1
Faulkner	20	88	5	2	3	20	0	0	0	0	1	1
Franklin	5	24	4	0	2	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fulton	16	25	2	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Garland	18E	67	2	9	7	30	9	0	1	0	2	3
Grant	7	16	1	2	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0
Green	2	95	4	6	4	25	10	0	2	0	6	0
Hempstead	8N	10	0	3	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	38	0	3	3	16	5	0	2	0	0	0
Howard	9W	8	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	49	2	3	2	15	2	0	2	0	0	2
Izard	16	30	0	1	1	13	5	0	5	0	0	1
Jackson	3	44	0	3	3	11	2	0	1	0	2	0
Jefferson	11W	67	5	3	4	29	3	0	0	0	0	1
Johnson	5	32	1	1	3	16	2	0	1	0	1	0
Lafayette	8S	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	26	3	0	2	14	2	0	1	0	0	0
Lee	1	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	15	0	1	2	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	52	2	0	2	14	1	0	1	0	0	0
Lonoke	23	104	4	2	4	32	5	0	1	0	0	0
Madison	4	32	2	2	2	11	1	0	0	0	2	0
Marion	14	13	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	8S	49	1	6	3	17	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mississippi	2	60	4	1	3	13	3	0	0	0	0	0
Monroe	1	10	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	6	0	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	5	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ouachita	13	21	0	1	2	10	1	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	6	0	2	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	33	2	2	1	12	1	0	1	0	0	0
Pike	9W	12	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	62	5	4	2	27	5	0	1	0	0	1
Polk	18W	20	1	2	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pope	5	37	5	3	5	21	1	0	0	0	0	0
Prairie	17	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	273	4	11	26	78	4	2	4	0	4	0
Randolph	3	31	3	1	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0
Saline	22	34	0	1	3	13	1	0	0	0	0	0
Scott	15	20	0	2	1	6	0	0	0	0	2	0
Searcy	20	6	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	346	10	16	22	99	6	0	9	0	4	4
Sevier	9W	25	2	1	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp	3	38	3	5	3	19	1	0	1	0	1	0
St. Francis	1	30	0	0	1	10	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	14	2	4	2	7	2	0	0	0	0	0
Union	13	42	3	1	2	17	0	0	0	1	1	0
Van Buren	20	14	0	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	4	234	12	16	27	78	7	1	5	0	2	6
White	17	76	4	5	10	41	7	0	2	0	2	0
Woodruff	1	22	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	36	0	2	4	10	0	0	0	0	2	0
Totals		3,062	135	181	214	1,092	137	3	47	1	45	37