



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
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News Release

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Report highlights improvements in CPS staff recruitment and retention, hotline management and foster home recruitment
Semi-Annual Child Welfare Report underscores success of agency's process improvement efforts

PHOENIX – The Department of Economic Security today released its latest Semi-Annual Child Welfare Report highlighting improvements made with its Child Protective Services Division regarding staff recruitment and retention, Child Abuse Hotline management and foster home recruitment efforts.

“Child safety is our utmost concern at the Department of Economic Security and this latest report shows our continuous efforts to improve the state’s child welfare system are working,” said Director Clarence Carter. “All children deserve to have a safe and healthy environment in which to learn and grow.”

The report finds there are 3,748 licensed foster homes. This reflects that for the first time in three years, the number of new licensed foster homes has outpaced the number of closing foster homes. The agency licensed 999 new foster homes in the six month period between April 1, 2012 and September 30, 2012, compared to the closing of 747 existing foster homes. Twenty-six percent of existing homes closed due to the adoption of the child(ren) placed in the home.

“During the past year, we have been actively engaging with faith and community-based organizations to help us meet the needs of a growing number of children in foster care,” adds Carter. “I’m proud to say they have answered that call. However, this is just the beginning. The need for new foster homes continues to grow and so we continue to call on all those who are able and willing to help our children.”

The report tells the story of this increasing need to provide safe homes for children. The number of children in out of home care rose to 14,111 from 11,535 for the same period last year. This increase is also reflected in the increase in the number of reports to the Child Abuse Hotline.

During a meeting with stakeholders today, the Department further noted improvements to the Child Abuse Hotline. The report shows calls to the Hotline increased by more than 2,900 or approximately 3 percent during the reporting period. However, hotline staff was able to answer 11 percent more calls in 2012 as compared to 2011.

The agency also highlighted recent improvements in CPS staff recruitment and retention. Through a new centralized and streamlined hiring process, CPS hired and trained 459 new caseworkers in 2012. The agency also partnered with Arizona State University (ASU) to evaluate and update its training opportunities for new and ongoing staff and supervisors.

“We know that one of the most important factors in retaining good caseworkers is having good supervisors,” adds Carter. “We have revamped the way we educate and train our supervisors so they can address the issues most important to the caseworkers and the agency.”

The Department also continues to move forward with its continuous process improvements as a result of Governor Brewer's Child Safety Task Force. These recommendations include the continuing work of the Social Work Assessment Team (SWAT) to address non-active cases, the full statewide implementation of the new Child Safety and Risk Assessment (CSRA) tool and the establishment of the Office of Child Welfare Investigations (OCWI).

"Our work to improve the system is far from done," adds Carter. "There is a sense of urgency in our agency to focus our efforts on breaking the bottlenecks in the system and replacing them with new, more effective and efficient ways of doing business, and most importantly, to ensure child safety."

The full Semi-Annual Child Welfare Report is available on the [DES website](#).

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