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## **CPS Caseworker Staffing at Capacity**

*DES Process Improvements Increase Caseworker Recruitment and Hiring, Lead to More Efficient Hotline Operations*

**PHOENIX** – New information from the Department of Economic Security’s Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) shows ongoing process improvements within Child Protective Services (CPS) have led to improved caseworker recruitment and hiring. CPS caseworker staffing has not been at full capacity in more than seven years.

**The Division has now filled 100 percent of its appropriated caseworker positions statewide, helping drive down CPS caseloads as new hires complete training and enter the field.** Currently, there are 856 CPS caseworkers in the field and another 214 in training. This gives the agency 1,070 CPS caseworkers who have been hired to do the critical job of helping identify and safeguard Arizona children at-risk.

“We are actively working to reduce our caseworker turnover rate, but, as with any business or organization, turnover is inevitable,” said Director Clarence Carter. “The idea is to keep the hiring momentum going so that as we lose workers, we will already have new employees in the hiring and training pipeline to replace them to minimize the impact on caseloads and casework. This is particularly important as CPS’ challenging work requires 22 weeks of pre-service training. So, to our incredible, dedicated staff, I’m happy to say, ‘help is on the way.’”

Caseworker staffing fluctuates on a day-to-day basis, but CPS has steadily increased its numbers due to an aggressive and sustained recruiting effort. To help with the recruitment and hiring process, DES recently hired Ed Richard as Staff Recruitment Manager for DCYF. Richard has worked to standardize and streamline the agency’s hiring practices statewide, and to change the format of CPS job postings so that they better reflect the duties of the positions. He has reached out to numerous communities, especially those in rural areas, to fill open positions.

Similarly, DES process improvements also have helped increase the efficiency of the Arizona Child Abuse Hotline. In June, DES brought on a new CPS Hotline Manager, Gary Quinones, with the goal of streamlining hotline operations, reducing wait times for callers and reducing the number of abandoned calls. Abandoned calls are those in which a caller hangs up before speaking with a CPS Hotline Specialist. By shifting staff schedules to better align with high call volume times and streamlining the documentation process required by CPS hotline staff, the rate of abandoned calls has fallen from 20 percent to approximately 8 percent. A recently-implemented caller interview process has also helped reduce the amount of time it takes for a mandated reporter to file a report.

“We have made great strides over the last few months to improve the operations at CPS, and we are starting to see the results of our hard work,” said Director Carter. “However, by no means does that mean the time for process improvements is over. This is a continuous effort, and DES will be intentional and diligent about consistently evaluating and re-evaluating how we operate to better serve our consumers.”