

DEPARTMENT OF

Children &
Family Services



Workforce, Caseloads, Contracts, and Confidentiality

Senate Health & Welfare | October 12, 2026





It is the mission of the department to protect children, empower families, and strengthen communities so every child grows up safe, stable, and strong.

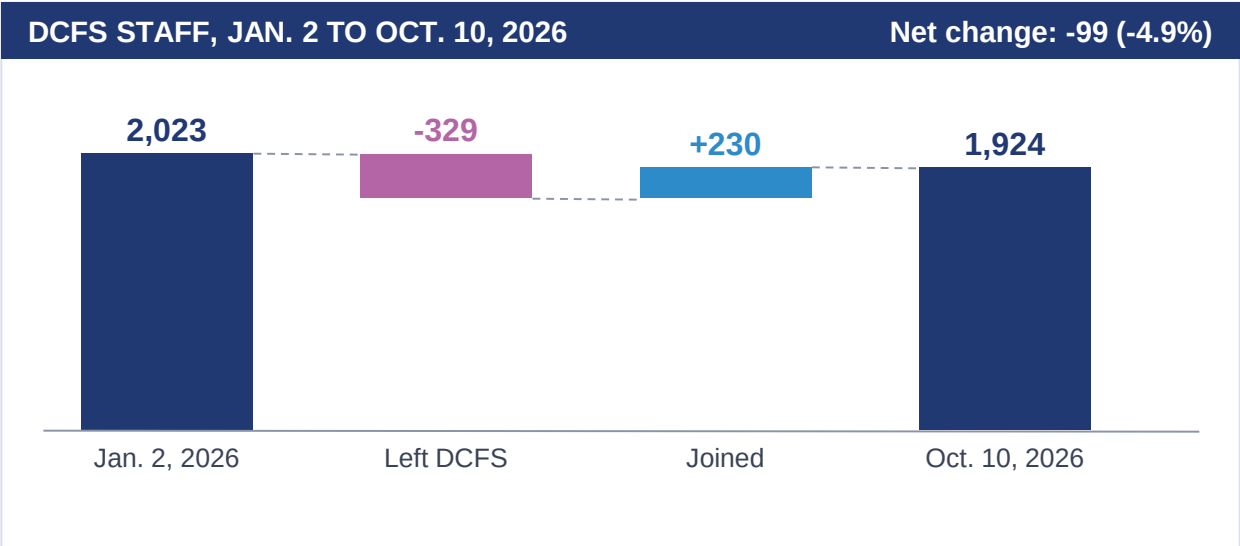


Vacancy Rates Across the Department



Authorized T.O. of 2,184 as of October 6, 2026. Overall vacancy is 11.8 percent, and 73 percent of the Department's vacant positions (188 of 258) are in Child Welfare.

DIVISION	FILLED	VACANT	AUTHORIZED	VACANCY RATE
Management & Finance (OMF)	209	48	257	18.7%
Child Welfare (CW)	1,352	188	1,540	12.2%
Family Support (FS)	365	22	387	5.7%
Department total	1,926	258	2,184	11.8%



WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW

More staff left than joined. Of the 2,023 filled T.O. positions on January 2, 329 staff have left DCFS (16%). 230 joined, a net loss of 99.

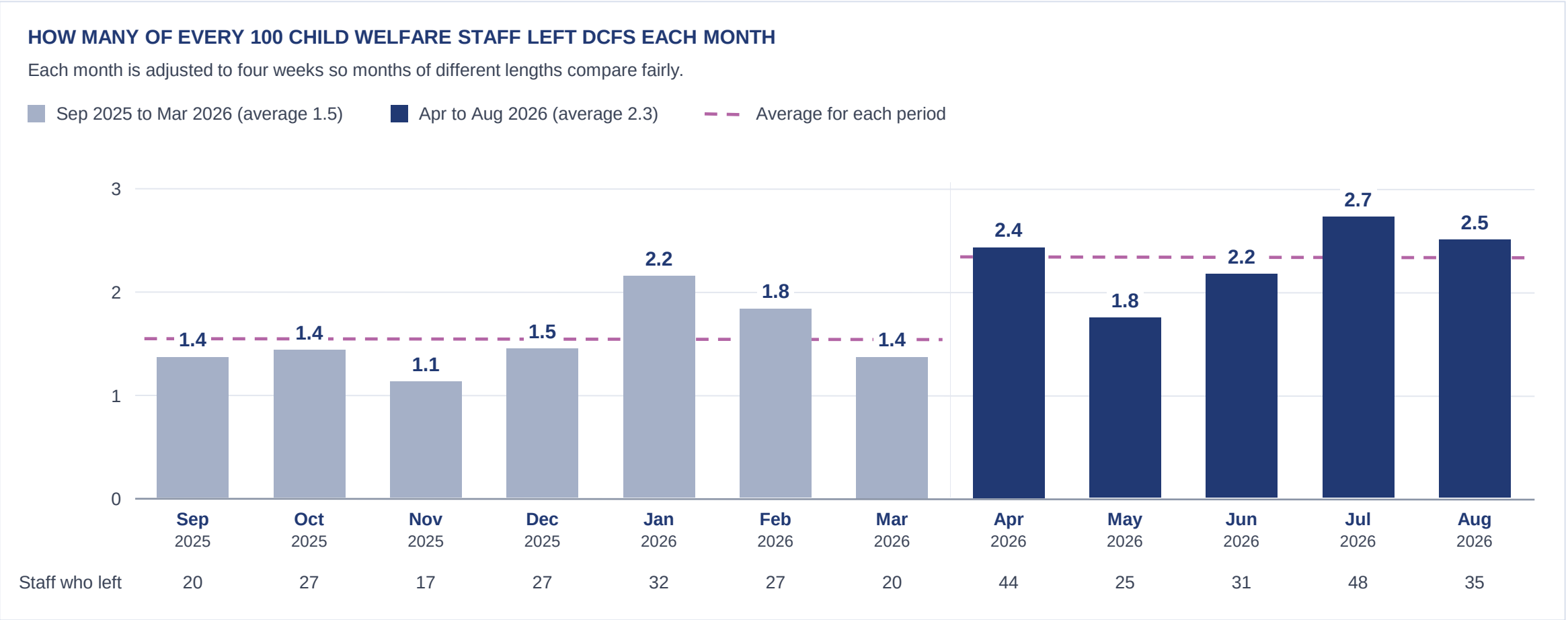
Child Welfare carries most of the change. 244 of the 329 who left (74%) and 163 of the 230 who joined were in Child Welfare, which also holds 188 of the 258 vacant positions.

The Department is responding. Slide 8 sets out the salary study with State Civil Service, the UL System workforce strategy, and the Training Academy investment.

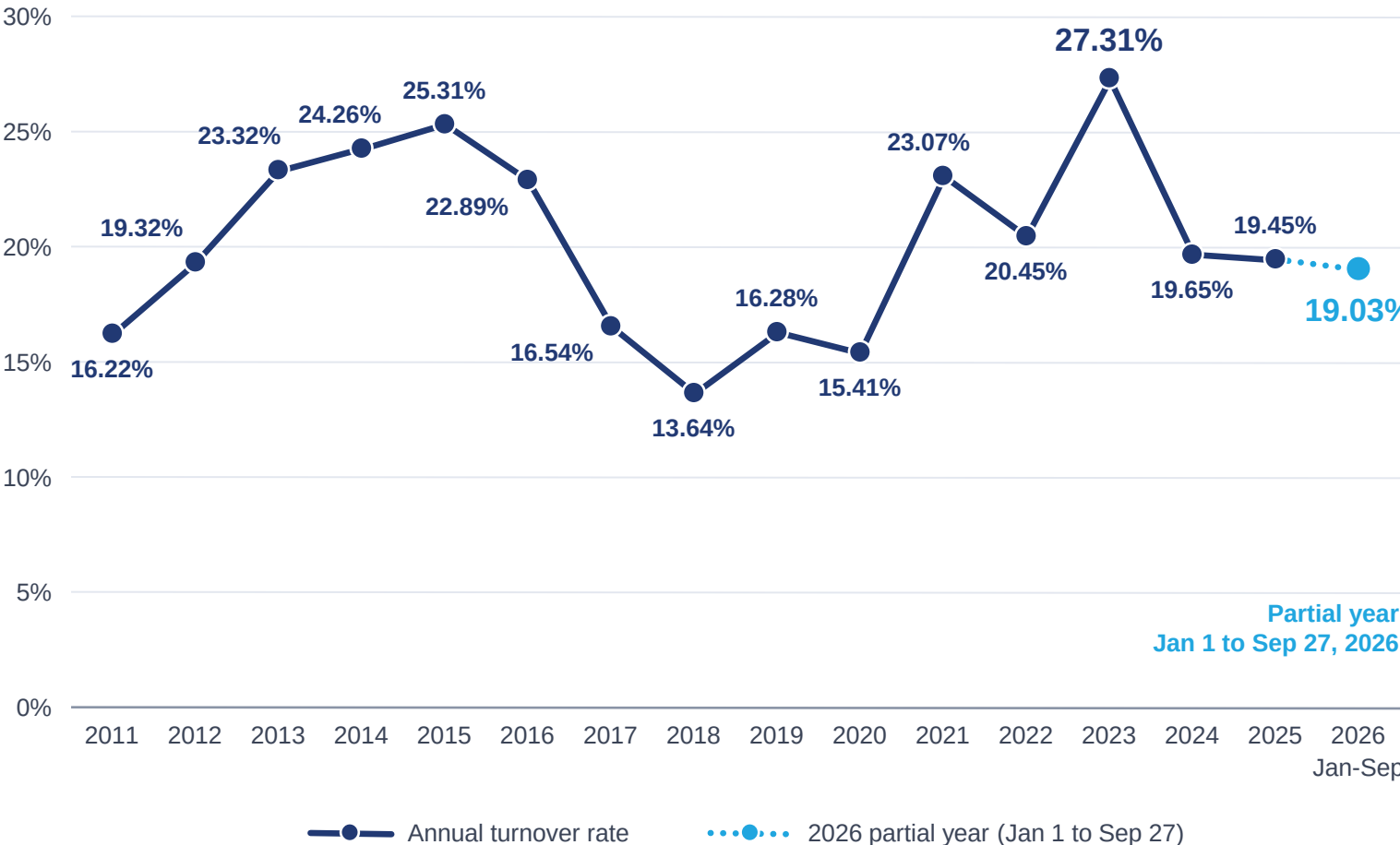
More Child Welfare Staff Have Left Since April



From September 2025 through March 2026, about 1.5 of every 100 Child Welfare staff left DCFS every four weeks. From April through August 2026, 2.3 left, an increase of 51%.



Child Welfare Turnover Fell 29% by 2025 and 2026 Is Already Near the 2025 Rate



THE TREND

19.03% so far in 2026

January 1 to September 27, close to the 19.45% for all of 2025. Turnover fell 29% from 2023 to 2025.

THE BASELINE

20.21%

Average for 2011 through 2025. 2024 and 2025 fell below it. 2026 is 1.18 points below it with three months left.

WHY IT MATTERS

Turnover fell from 2023 to 2025 but has risen since April 2026 (slide 4). The actions on slide 8 target the staff most likely to leave.

National studies note that workforce stability is a common factor among states with good CFSR outcomes.

New and Frontline Staff Leave Most Often



ROLE AND TITLE, AUG 2025	STAFF	LEFT DCFS	SHARE
BY ROLE			
Caseworkers (CWS Trainee to CWS 3)	715	171	23.9%
Supervisors	192	14	7.3%
Managers and executives	104	10	9.6%
Consultants, analysts, and program staff	279	51	18.3%
Clerical and administrative support	169	27	16.0%
CASEWORKER TITLES			
Child Welfare Specialist Trainee	57	19	33.3%
Child Welfare Specialist 1	68	25	36.8%
Child Welfare Specialist 2	99	27	27.3%
Child Welfare Specialist 3	491	100	20.4%

SERVICE AND STATUS, AUG 2025	STAFF	LEFT DCFS	SHARE
YEARS OF STATE SERVICE			
Under 1 year	114	48	42.1%
1 to 2 years	266	68	25.6%
3 to 4 years	121	27	22.3%
5 to 9 years	280	41	14.6%
10 years or more	675	89	13.2%
APPOINTMENT STATUS			
Probational	246	90	36.6%
Permanent	1,192	178	14.9%
Other appointment types	21	5	23.8%
All Child Welfare staff	1,459	273	18.7%

FRONTLINE CASEWORKERS

23.9%

left DCFS

171 of 715 caseworkers left, against 14 of 192 supervisors (7.3%).

FIRST YEAR OF STATE SERVICE

42.1%

left DCFS

48 of 114 staff in their first year, against 13.2% of staff with 10 or more years.

Baton Rouge and Monroe Lost Staff Fastest



Baton Rouge lost 32 of its 111 Child Welfare staff (28.8%) between August 2025 and August 2026, and its headcount fell to 89. Lafayette lost the smallest share, 10.6%.

REGION (AUG 2025 ORG UNIT)	STAFF AUG 2025	LEFT DCFS	SHARE	CASEWORKERS WHO LEFT	STAFF AUG 2026
Baton Rouge	111	32	28.8%	22 of 60 (36.7%)	89
Monroe	116	30	25.9%	20 of 62 (32.3%)	108
Shreveport	143	29	20.3%	20 of 82 (24.4%)	144
Alexandria	120	23	19.2%	18 of 60 (30.0%)	118
Covington	172	33	19.2%	27 of 110 (24.5%)	170
Lake Charles	86	13	15.1%	5 of 42 (11.9%)	89
Thibodaux	119	17	14.3%	15 of 69 (21.7%)	118
Greater New Orleans	139	18	12.9%	15 of 68 (22.1%)	150
Lafayette	170	18	10.6%	10 of 93 (10.8%)	169
State office units	283	60	21.2%	19 of 69 (27.5%)	239
All Child Welfare staff	1,459	273	18.7%	171 of 715 (23.9%)	1,394

BATON ROUGE

28.8% left DCFS

32 of 111 staff, including 22 of 60 caseworkers. Staff fell from 111 to 89.

LOWEST SHARES

10.6% Lafayette

Greater New Orleans lost 12.9% and grew from 139 to 150 staff.

INVESTIGATION UNITS

26.6% left DCFS

53 of 199 staff in CPS units, the highest of any program. Foster care units: 22.7%.

DCFS Is Acting on Pay, Recruitment, and Training



Caseworkers leave DCFS in their first year at the highest rates. Workforce stability is a primary factor in child safety, so we are addressing the root causes of vacancy and turnover.

1 SALARIES

Child Welfare Specialist salary job study

DCFS is actively working with State Civil Service on a job study of Child Welfare Specialist salaries.

WHY IT MATTERS

23.9% of caseworkers left DCFS in the past year. Civil Service reported FY 2025 statewide turnover of 40.00% for CWS 1 and 27.08% for CWS 2.

2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Statewide strategy with the University of Louisiana System

DCFS is partnering with the University of Louisiana System to develop a statewide, multidisciplinary workforce development strategy for the Department.

WHY IT MATTERS

188 of 1,540 Child Welfare positions were vacant on October 6, 2026 (12.2%).

3 TRAINING

Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy

DCFS is making a substantial investment in, and improvements to, the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy, in partnership with the UL System.

WHY IT MATTERS

42.1% of staff in their first year of state service left DCFS within twelve months.

Child Welfare Workload at a Glance



CALLS RECEIVED

88,199

Calls to the Child Safety Response Center, August 2025 to August 2026.

ACCEPTED FOR INVESTIGATION

27,181

Reports accepted for a CPS investigation, August 2025 to August 2026, an average of 2,091 a month.

OPEN BACKLOG

1,666 cases

Open backlog cases on October 10, 2026, up 111 (7%) from 1,555 in August 2026.

OPEN CPS INVESTIGATIONS

6,265 cases

Open CPS investigations on October 10, 2026, including the 1,666 backlog cases.

Baton Rouge Carries the Heaviest Caseload



OPEN CPS INVESTIGATIONS BY REGION, OCTOBER 10, 2026

					CASES PER CPS POSITION, IF SPREAD EVENLY			
		OPEN	BACKLOG	CURRENT	FILLED POSITIONS (185 ON SEPT. 24)		IF ALL WERE FILLED (219 ALLOCATED)	
					ALL OPEN	CURRENT	ALL OPEN	CURRENT
	■ Backlog investigations							
	■ Current investigations (open minus backlog)							
Baton Rouge		1,666	1,200	466	119.0	33.3	75.7	21.2
Greater New Orleans		863	25	838	29.8	28.9	25.4	24.6
Covington		845	189	656	31.3	24.3	26.4	20.5
Lafayette		639	21	618	29.0	28.1	23.7	22.9
Shreveport		632	45	587	21.8	20.2	21.1	19.6
Monroe		510	116	394	31.9	24.6	23.2	17.9
Thibodaux		422	7	415	22.2	21.8	22.2	21.8
Lake Charles		415	48	367	29.6	26.2	27.7	24.5
Alexandria		273	15	258	18.2	17.2	15.2	14.3
Statewide		6,265	1,666	4,599	33.9	24.9	28.6	21.0

STATEWIDE

6,265 open investigations

Statewide on October 10, 2026, including 1,666 in the backlog. About 34 per filled CPS position if spread evenly.

BATON ROUGE BACKLOG PROJECT

15 investigators on the backlog

Experienced CPS investigators from Greater New Orleans, Thibodaux, Shreveport, and Monroe work Baton Rouge backlog cases on overtime. Cases with an unresolved safety concern stay with Baton Rouge for immediate action.

Hiring and training: Baton Rouge's Regional Administrator and Area Director are focused on hiring and training new staff, while focusing on keeping new investigations from aging into the backlog.

Timeline: The project began September 28, 2026 and runs through the end of the calendar year.

Reducing the Backlog While Keeping Safety a Priority



25 backlog cases on Oct. 10

Since January 2026, Greater New Orleans has used a Lean Six Sigma (LSS) project to clear their backlog and close new CPS investigations within the 60-day policy timeframe. On October 10, only 25 of its 863 open investigations (3%) were in the backlog.

The Area Director tracks results each week on a control chart.

- Day 25 to 31:** Caseworker and supervisor list each task needed to close the case, with an owner and a due date.
- Day 39 to 45:** The supervisor checks the tasks. If the case cannot close, the manager is notified.
- Day 51 and later:** The manager and Area Director are notified. Two days before a case reaches 60 days, the Regional Administrator is notified.

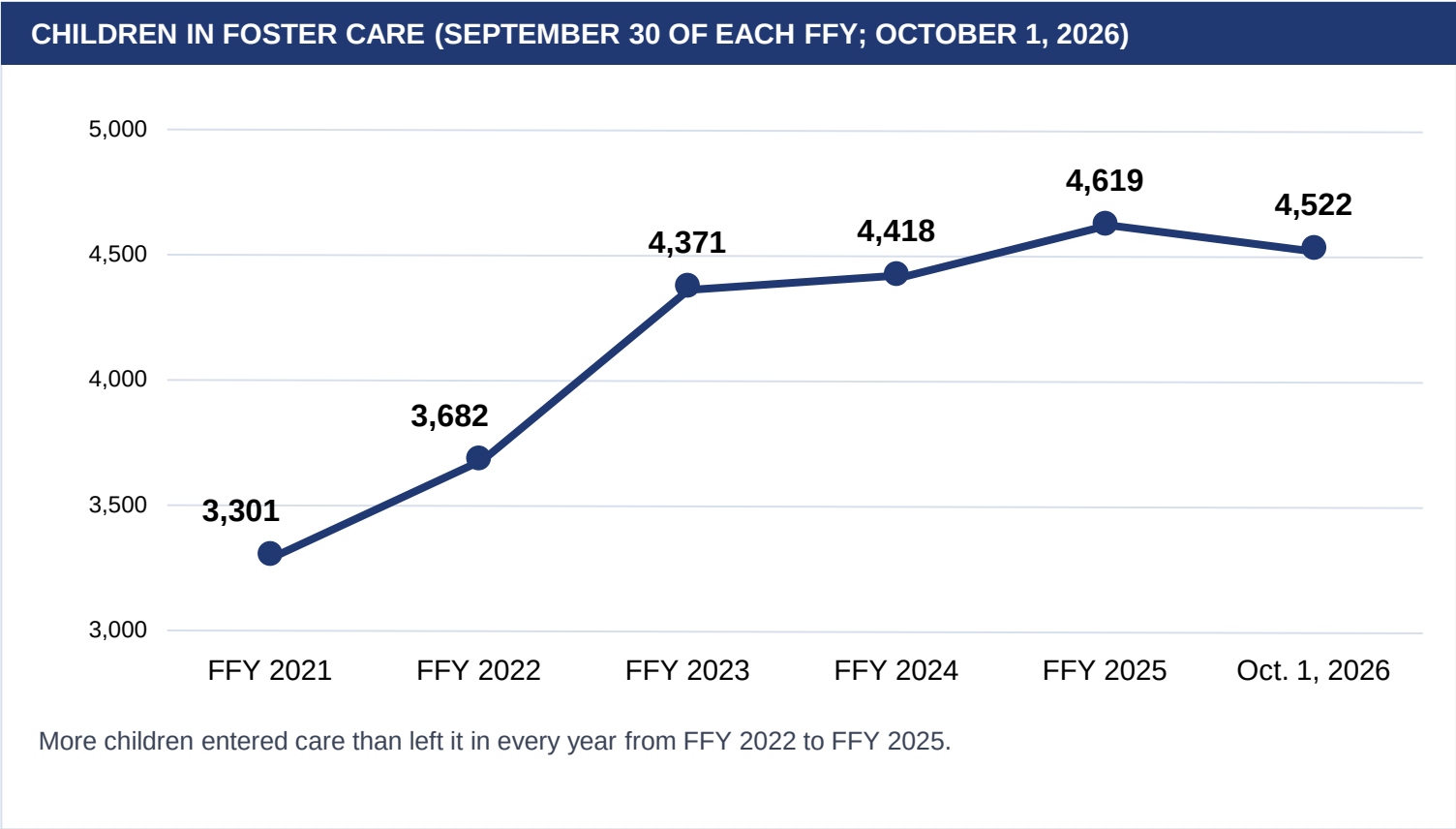
1,200 backlog cases on Oct. 10

Baton Rouge which holds 72% of the statewide backlog and is now using the same LSS approach, with weekly staffings and leadership review before cases reach 60 days. No case is closed just to meet a target, and cases with an unresolved safety concern stay with Baton Rouge for immediate action.

More Children in Foster Care, Higher Caseloads



Louisiana had 1,318 more children in foster care at the end of FFY 2025 than at the end of FFY 2021, an increase of 40%. Each additional child adds to foster care caseloads.



FOSTER CARE

+1,318 children, FFY 2021 to 2025

Growth in care adds to foster care caseloads.

FOSTER CARE CASELOADS

14.5 children per filled position

The average if the children in foster care were spread evenly across the 320 filled foster care positions (September 24, 2026).

Source: AFCARS Dashboard, Louisiana, Children's Bureau (FFY 2023 to 2025 preliminary); October 1, 2026 count from DCFS.

Keeping Children Safely at Home and in Families



Louisiana was one of the first states to act on the federal A Home for Every Child initiative. DCFS has an ACF-approved plan to achieve its goal. DCFS is pairing it with prevention services so more struggling families can be served before crisis occurs, and more supports so more children can be cared for safely at home.

SAFELY AT HOME	HOMES WAITING ON CHILDREN	PERMANENCY
More supports so children can be cared for safely at home When a child can remain safely at home, DCFS is adding in-home services and community supports so the family can care for the child safely. Prevention services help families before harm occurs, including a partnership with Woman’s Hospital for families of substance-exposed newborns.	A home ready for every child who must enter foster care Governor Landry signed the ‘A Home for Every Child’ proclamation on February 24, 2026. The goal is one certified foster home for every child in care, with progress published monthly by parish. HomeReady, launched October 7, 2026, moved kinship and certification online.	A safe, permanent family for every child in care When children enter foster care, DCFS works first to return them safely home, if appropriate. When that is not possible, DCFS works to find them another permanent family, such as through adoption or guardianship. In 2025, 634 children were adopted.
2,972 families served in their homes in 2025	1,013 newly certified foster homes in 2025	2,118 children safely reunified with their families in 2025

DCFS Contracts for PPCS Services



CHILD SUPPORT LEGAL SERVICES District attorneys in 40 judicial districts and Orleans Parish establish paternity and support orders and enforce them in court. A contract with the LDAA coordinates with the district attorney contracts.	LEGAL REPRESENTATION Louisiana law requires an independent attorney for every child in a child in need of care case and gives parents the same right at every stage. These contracts provide that representation, so hearings are not delayed for lack of counsel.	WORKFORCE TRAINING Contracts provide training for new child welfare and child support staff, ongoing and online courses, curriculum development, recruitment support, and training to partners and providers.	EXECUTIVE ORDER JML 24-11 “Evaluate contracts, especially those that are expiring, to determine if they are necessary to renew or if they can be reduced or terminated going forward.” DCFS applies this review to each contract before renewal.
PREVENTION SERVICES In-home prevention services for mental health, substance use, and parenting skills, along with juvenile court preplacement programs, serve families so children can stay safely at home.	ADVOCACY FOR CHILD VICTIMS Advocates serve child victims of sex trafficking. Child advocacy centers serve children who have been abused, and court-appointed advocates speak for abused and neglected children in court.	FAMILY SUPPORT Domestic violence programs, pregnancy support centers, and homeless initiatives serve families. Other contracts cover child support payment processing.	CONTRACTS AND FUNDING 292 active contracts \$141,719,282 total contract value 17.9% of the total DCFS budget

Federal and State Law Require Confidentiality



Each federal program administered by DCFS conditions its funding on keeping records confidential, and Louisiana law adds its own protections.

FEDERAL CONDITIONS ON DCFS PROGRAMS

- Child abuse prevention (CAPTA): the state plan must preserve the confidentiality of all records, with limited exceptions
42 U.S.C. § 5106a(b)(2)(B)(viii)
- Child welfare and foster care (Titles IV-B and IV-E): use and disclosure of information about children and families served is limited to program purposes 42 U.S.C. § 671(a)(8); 45 C.F.R. § 1355.21(a)
- Child support (Title IV-D): safeguards must protect the parties' privacy, and data access is limited to what the program needs and to named personnel 42 U.S.C. §§ 654(26), 654a(d)(1); 45 C.F.R. § 307.13
- Child support information may not be disclosed outside program administration except as federal law allows 45 C.F.R. § 303.21(c)

LOUISIANA LAW

- Records on adoption, foster care, abuse and neglect investigations, and other child welfare services are confidential
R.S. 46:56
- Records of people applying for or receiving aid to dependent children are outside the Public Records Law R.S. 44:4(2)
- Reports of abuse or neglect, and juvenile court records, are confidential Ch.C. Arts. 412(A), 616(C)
- The identity of the person who made a report is protected
Ch.C. Art. 615(G); R.S. 46:56(F)(8)(b)
- The child support case registry must be safeguarded against unauthorized use or disclosure R.S. 46:236.10(C)(2)

Penalties: A breach can bring discipline up to termination for employees, monetary penalties for the Department, and fines or imprisonment for others. Unlawful release of child welfare records carries a fine of up to \$2,500, up to two years in jail, or both (R.S. 46:56(I)).

What DCFS Can Share in a Public Hearing



Louisiana law allows limited public disclosure in three situations. Other case information goes only to recipients the law names, and they must keep it confidential.

SHARED PUBLICLY

- Statewide and regional data that identifies no child or family, such as the figures in this presentation
- Summary information when a physician determined abuse or neglect contributed to a child's death or near death R.S. 46:56(F)(9)(a)
- Information to confirm, clarify, or correct a case already made public by sources outside the Department R.S. 46:56(F)(9)(b)

SHARED ONLY WITH NAMED RECIPIENTS

- Law enforcement, district attorneys, and courts R.S. 46:56(F)(4)(a); Ch.C. Art. 616(B)
- The state child ombudsman; records stay confidential in the ombudsman's hands R.S. 46:56(N)
- On written request, limited information to an examining physician, a legislative committee in closed session, a day care or residential provider's director, and attorneys R.S. 46:56(F)(10)
- A mandatory reporter who made the report R.S. 46:56(F)(9)(c)

NEVER RELEASED PUBLICLY

- Names or addresses of children and families served under the Title IV-E plan, which federal law also bars from any legislative committee 42 U.S.C. § 671(a)(8)
- The identity of the person who made the report Ch.C. Art. 615(G); R.S. 46:56(F)(9)(e)
- Child support registry information that could reveal where a party or child is, when that could cause harm R.S. 46:236.10(C)(2)(c)

For this hearing: DCFS will answer with aggregate data and permitted summaries. For a legislative committee, case information is limited to whether a substantiated report exists and the investigation's status, determination, and action, in closed session (R.S. 46:56(F)(10)).

Building Momentum

Recent accomplishments are aimed at continuing to improve outcomes for children and families across Louisiana.

CHILD WELFARE MODERNIZATION & REFORM

- **HomeReady:** the first technology advancement in child welfare in almost a decade
- Completed the child welfare reorganization
- Released the procurement for a modern child welfare system
- **Backlog reduction:** continued progress on a backlog that has persisted for roughly a decade

CHILD SAFETY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Initiated a Safe Sleep Campaign
- Continued development of a CQI team
- Cross training with the Attorney General's Office related to Critical Incident Review Team practices

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS & RESOURCES

- **Hope Starts Here:** engaged more than 100 pastors for AH4EC
- **UL System:** in discussions on a new statewide workforce development and training strategy
- New MOUs with district attorneys across the state to increase legal representation in Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases
- New partnership strategy for Care Kits

CULTURE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Culture Reset underway:** "Own the Outcome" is our focus
- Issued uniforms to frontline staff
- Implemented EVV



The Work Continues.

*For every child. For every family.
For Louisiana.*

All facts in this presentation were gathered by DCFS staff. Artificial intelligence tools were used to reformat the information into this presentation. This presentation was edited and fact-checked by DCFS staff before being published.

