

## SOCIAL SERVICES TRENDS

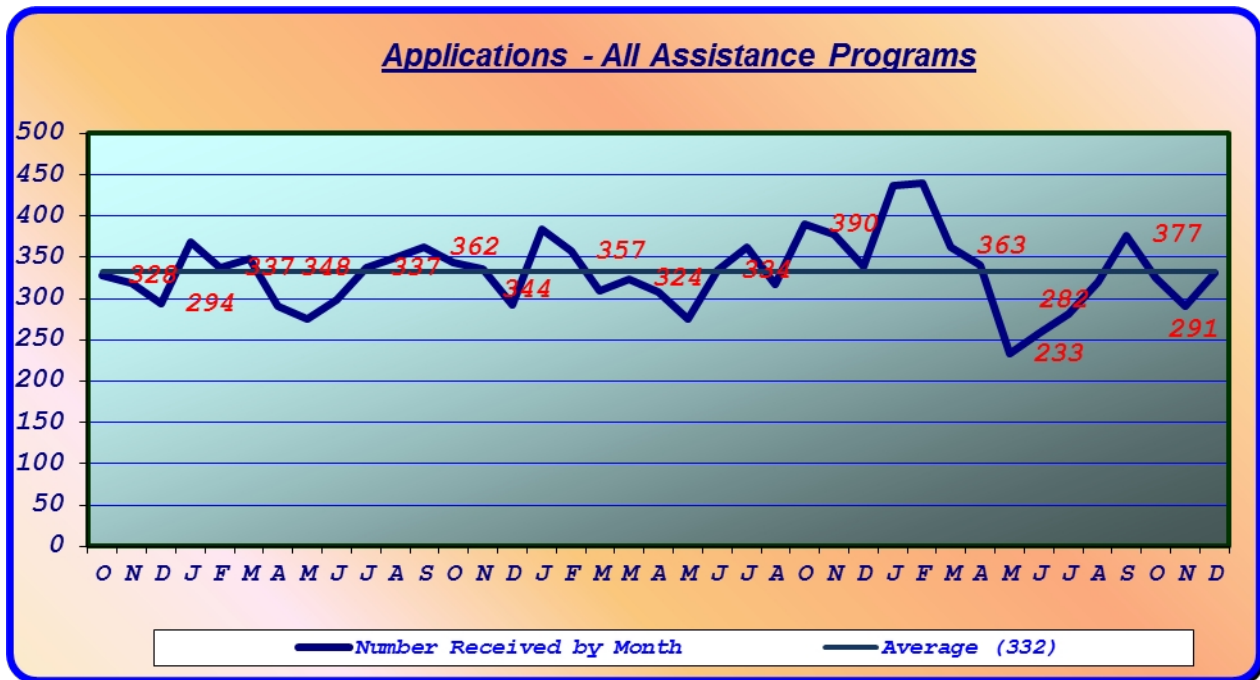
Quarter Ending: December 31, 2014

**Social Services Trends** is a quarterly report to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and members of the public. This report provides case counts, application data, referrals for services and other workload information in the Department of Social Services. This edition of Trends includes case counts and workload data for the three-month quarter that ended December 31, 2014. The Department welcomes questions regarding the information contained in this report or about our programs and services. Additional information regarding our programs is available by calling 530-283-6350 or by accessing the Plumas County web site at [www.countyofplumas.com](http://www.countyofplumas.com).

### **I. WELFARE TO WORK & PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DIVISION**

#### **A. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

As was reported last quarter there has been some stability in application counts. The new open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act began in October and that clearly accounts for the rise in applications to a count of 377. But the Department notes that within the next two months, November and December, the count dropped back down to average and below average numbers. The Department also notes that there are signs of an improving local economy with jobs in construction beginning to reappear, particularly with the comparatively mild winter so far. That could also account for a drop in applications.



## B. CONTINUING CASES

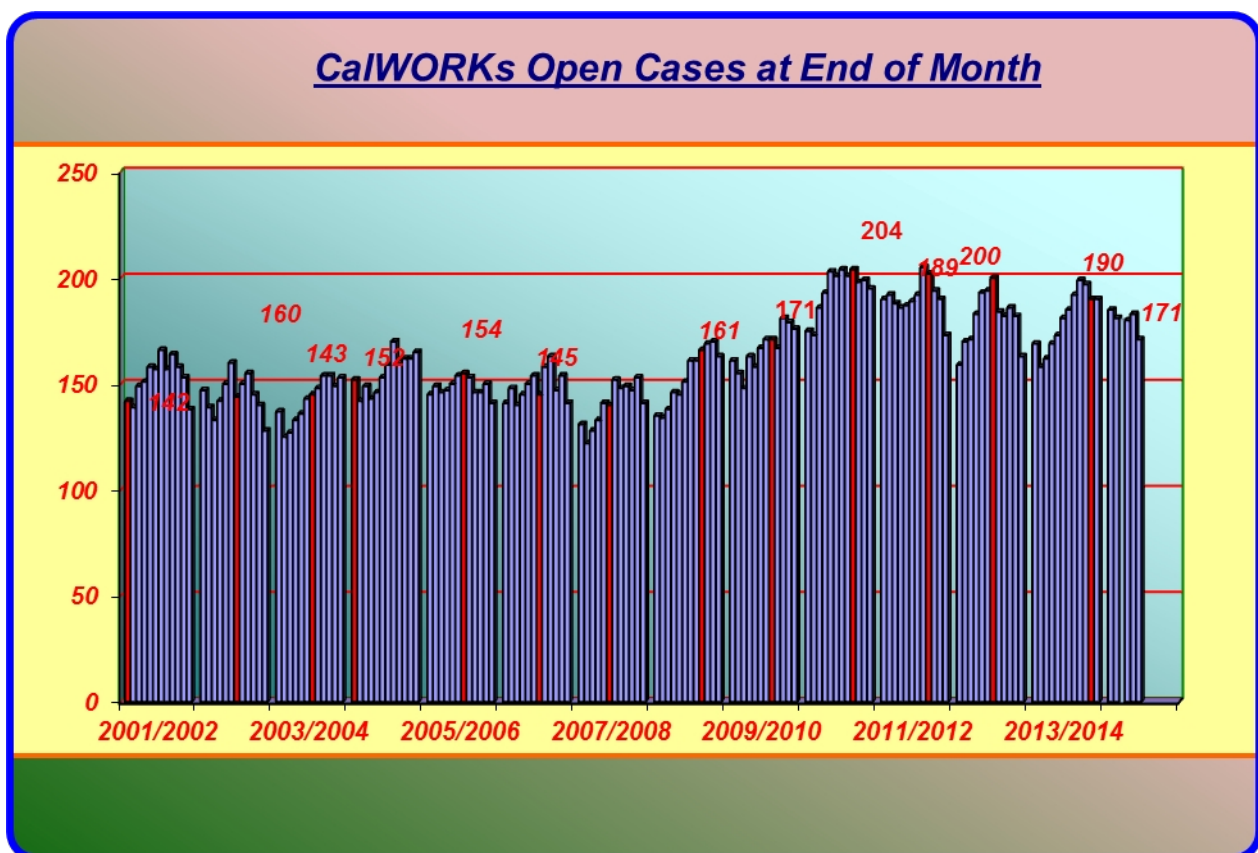
### (1). Cash Assistance (AFDC/CalWORKs)

The case count dropped again during the past three months (171 cases at the end of December) and the overall case count has remained below 200 since January of 2013. This continues to be encouraging.

The Department continues to associate the drop in CalWORKs cases with CalWORKs recipients earning sufficient income from employment that they no longer need to rely on CalWORKs cash. The lower case count during this period not only reflects that, but also that there are jobs to be found for the former recipients.

#### Average Monthly Caseload

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 2011/2012 | 191 |
| 2012/2013 | 181 |
| 2013/2014 | 180 |



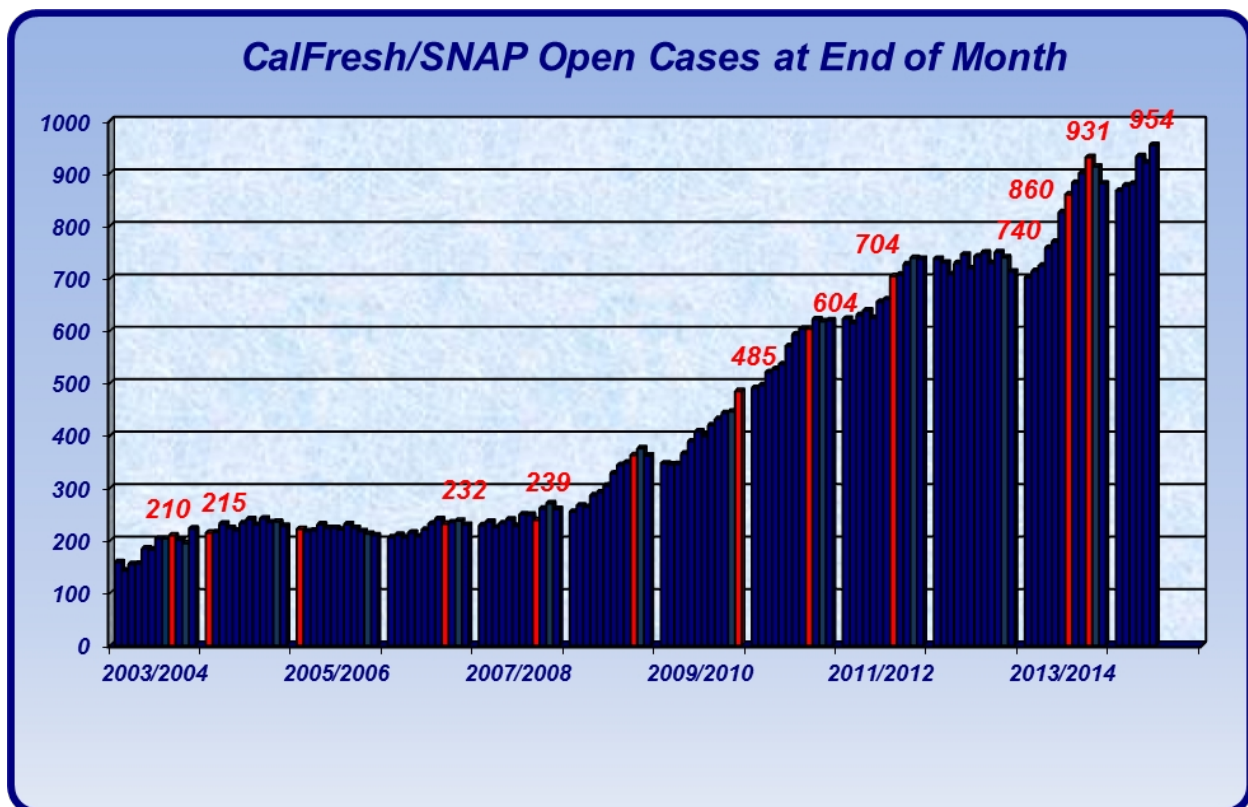
## (2). CalFresh (Food Stamps) Assistance

### A. Case Count

Generally, the Department expects to see growth in the case count for CalFresh during the winter months, so the growth that is shown below is not unexpected. However, looking at the trend for the past twelve to fifteen months indicates less growth than might otherwise have been anticipated for this period. The Department believes that this could be attributable to a gradual emergence from the recession. While we will know more about that as we move into warmer months, the signs are that jobs are beginning to appear again.

#### Average Monthly Caseload

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 2012/2013 | 733 |
| 2013/2014 | 822 |
| 2014/2015 | 905 |

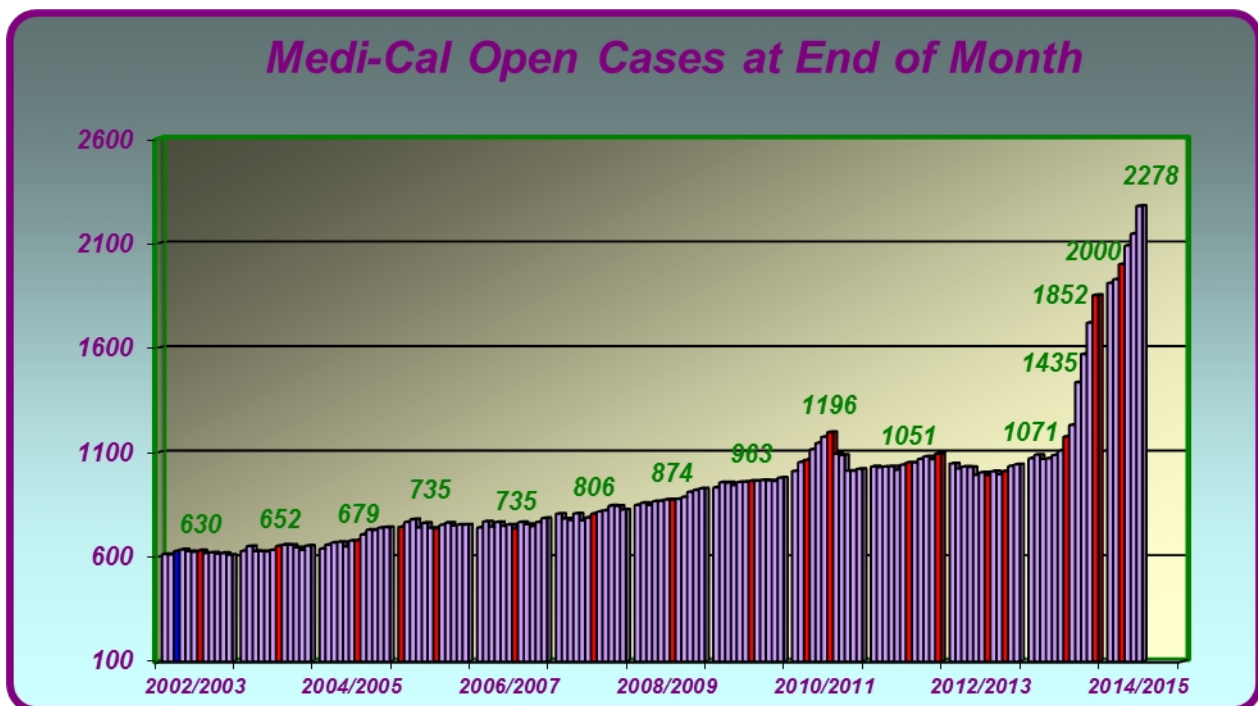


### (3). Medi-Cal

The first year of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) resulted in adding just under 1,000 new cases to the Medi-Cal case count. While a good number of these new cases came from the former CMSP and Path2Health programs, many of the new Medi-Cal members are people who did not have any form of coverage prior to the ACA. A new open enrollment period for Covered California opened last November. While the Department does not expect to see new enrollment in Medi-Cal to reach nearly the levels from the year before, we do expect to see growth.

#### Average Monthly Caseload

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| 2012/2013 | 1017 |
| 2013/2014 | 1459 |
| 2014/2015 | 2058 |

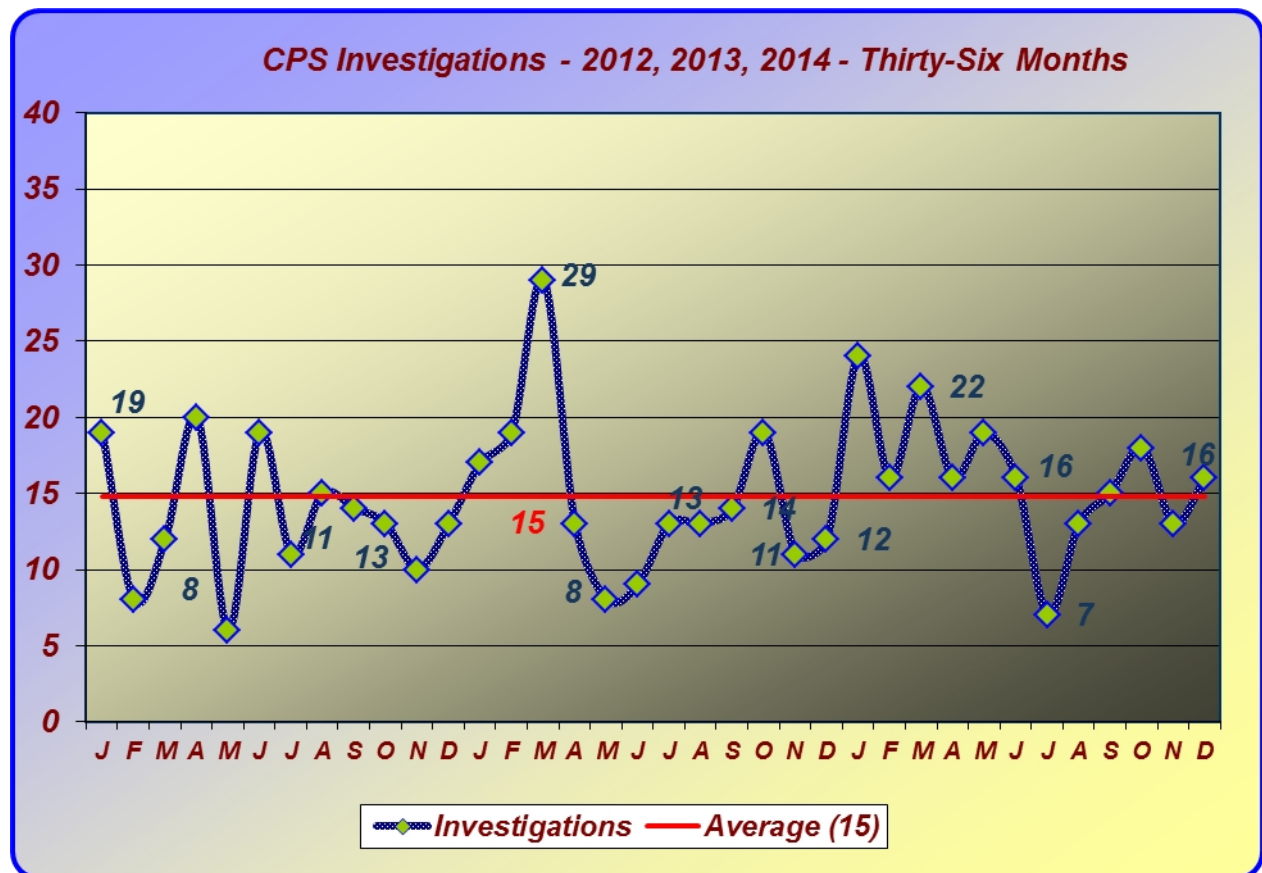


## II. SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

### A. Child Welfare Services

The Emergency Response component of Child Protective Services averages in the range of about 15 child abuse investigations per month. During this most recent quarter, the number of investigations has hovered around the average closing the quarter with 16 investigations in December.

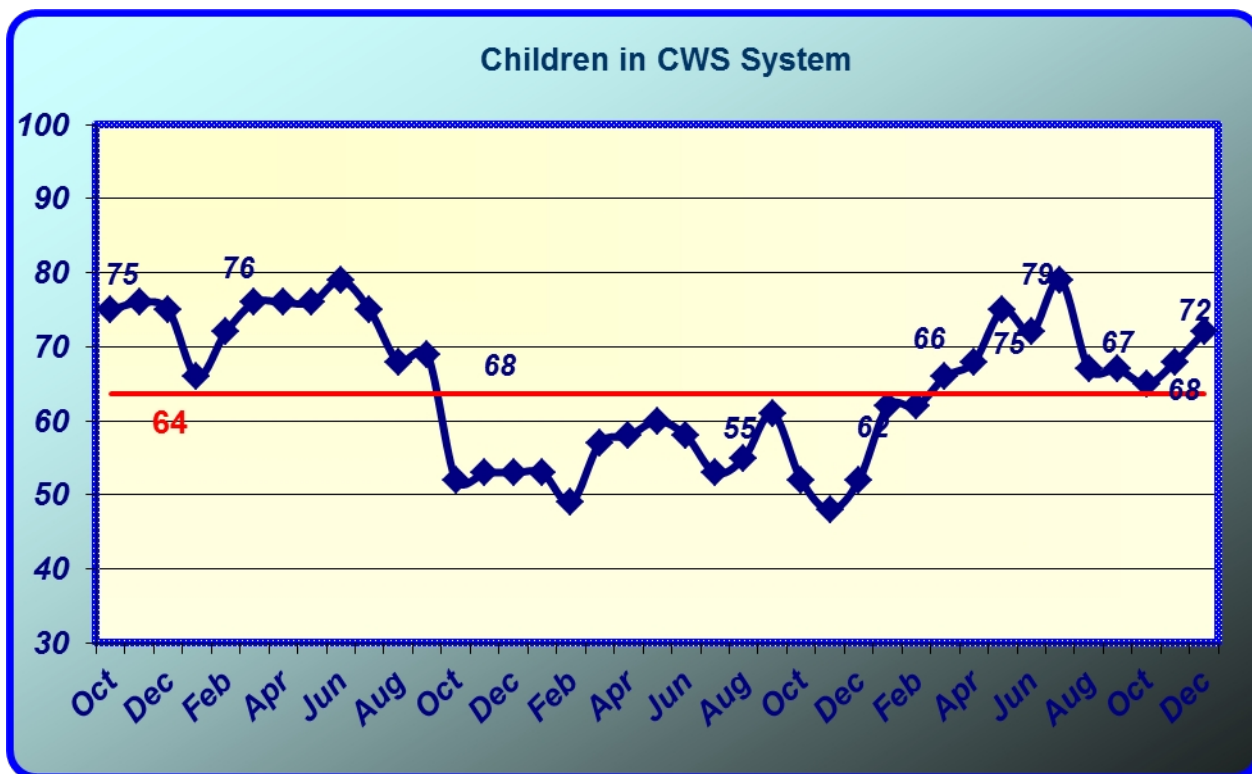
As the Department has noted previously, we have continued to experience significant numbers of cases where the precipitating factors leading to abuse and neglect are associated with substance abuse, in particular methamphetamine but also alcohol and other drugs. Substance abuse is the foremost reason that children are removed from unsafe environments.



## **B. Children in the Child Welfare Services System**

As has been reported previously, changes in the law under Assembly Bill 12 of 2012 allowed some children to stay in the Child Welfare System longer. This had led to some growth in the count of the number of children in our system.

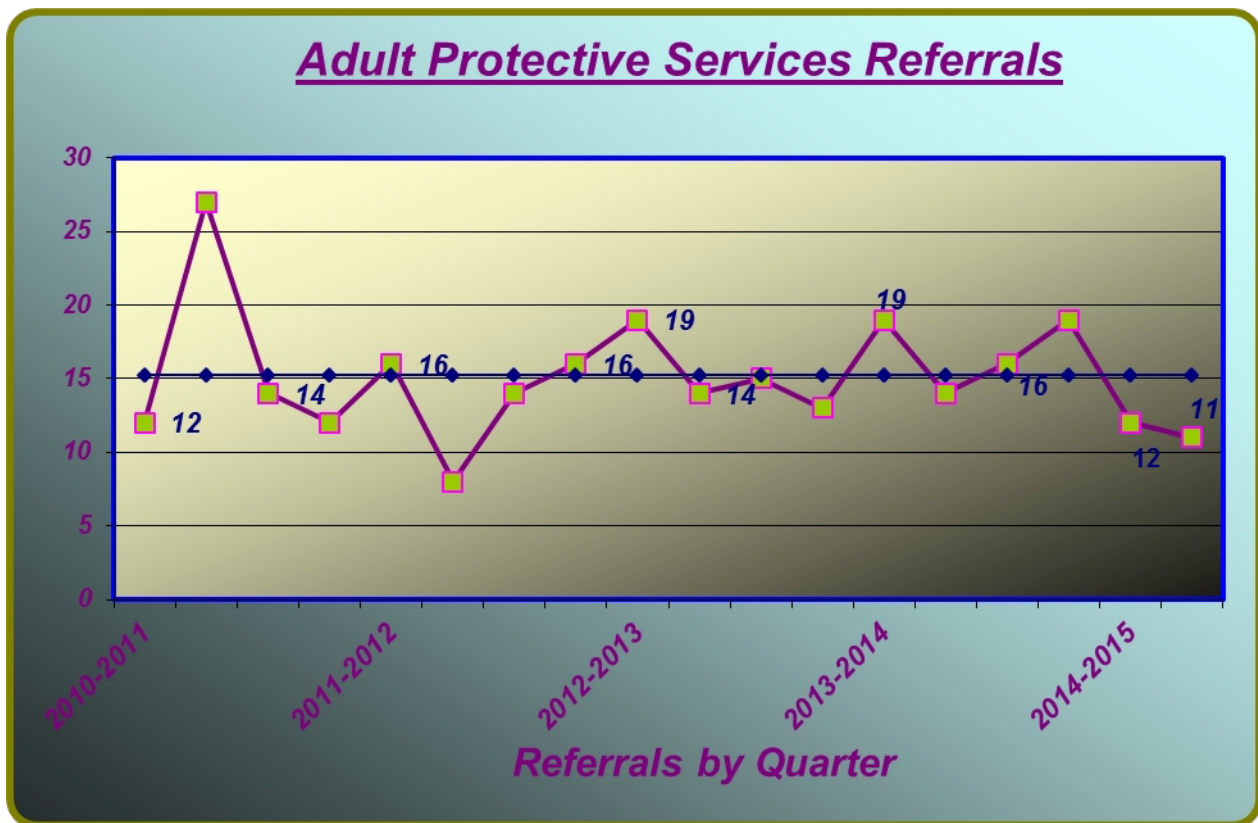
The Department has continued its trend toward placing foster children with relatives and with non-related extended family members. This has placed us in a position where we are less reliant on foster family agencies and foster homes for placement resources. While we expect that trend to continue, there remains a need for Foster Homes for children who come into our system.



### C. Adult Protective Services

Referrals for investigation of adults who've been abused or neglected generally have been at or below average levels during the past thirty-six months. The average rate has been about 15 referrals per quarter. For the three month quarter that ended in December, the Department received 11 referrals.

Referrals from financial institutions regarding suspicious circumstances connected with an elderly or disabled person's bank account have continued to account for many of the requests for investigation we receive. The Department also receives referrals that are for self-neglect. In some of these situations it is not always possible to intercede because the referent still has a right to self-determination.



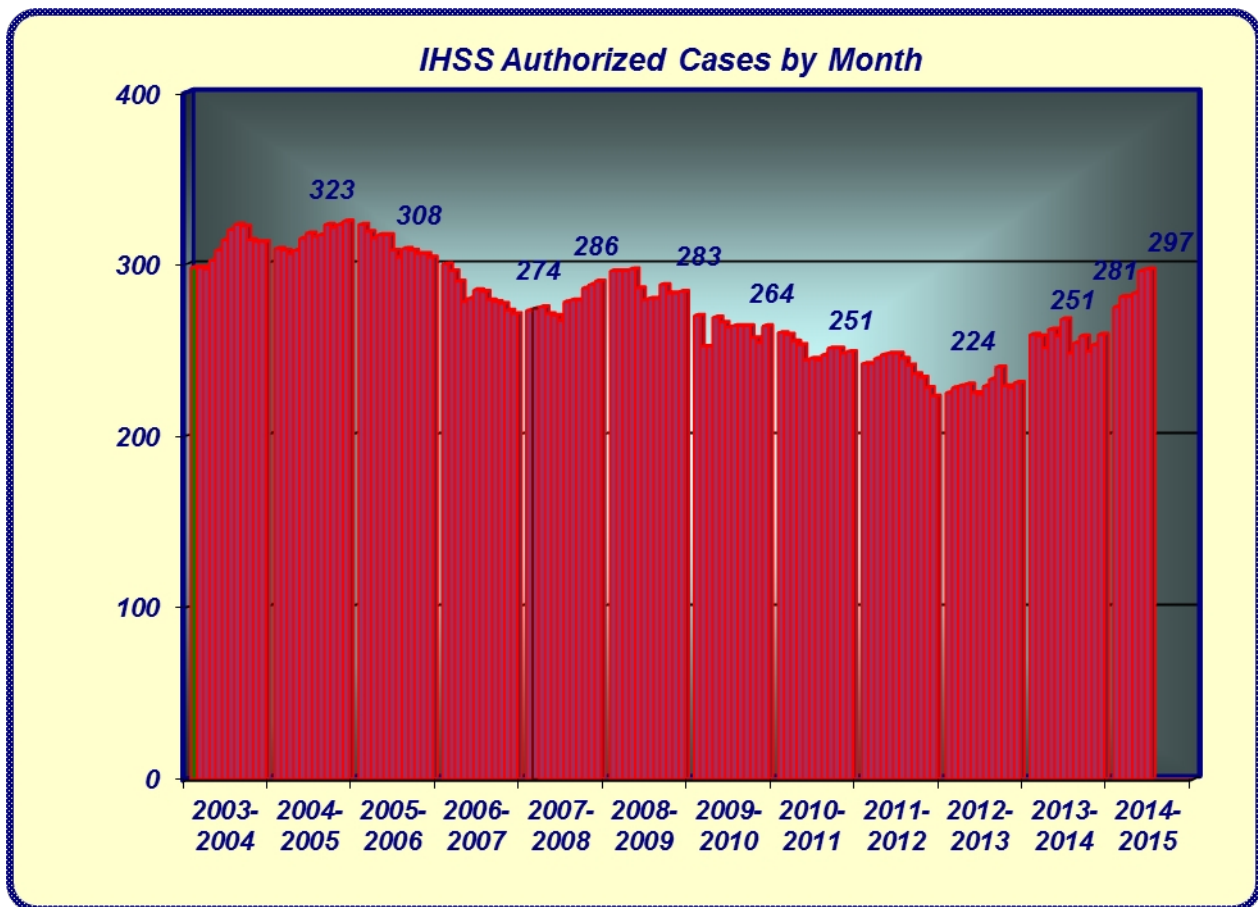
#### **D. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)**

The IHSS program experienced a fairly steady period of case count decline from around 2009 to mid-2013. Those reductions in case count were linked to several state regulation and legislative changes that both changed eligibility requirements and reduced the number of authorized hours that could be approved under some circumstances.

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act, the Department determined that it would be likely that the case count might grow some due to people becoming eligible for Medi-Cal (federal Medicaid), as IHSS is funded by Medicaid dollars. That has turned out to be a correct prediction. We believe that we will continue to see some growth in this program due to the ACA.

#### **Average Monthly Case Count**

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| <b>2012/2013</b> | <b>229</b> |
| <b>2013/2014</b> | <b>256</b> |
| <b>2014/2015</b> | <b>286</b> |



### **III. PUBLIC GUARDIAN**

The Public Guardian currently provides guardianship and conservator services to a total of 10 LPS and Probate conservatees. The Public Guardian also serves as representative payee for 7 SSI recipients.