

SOCIAL SERVICES TRENDS

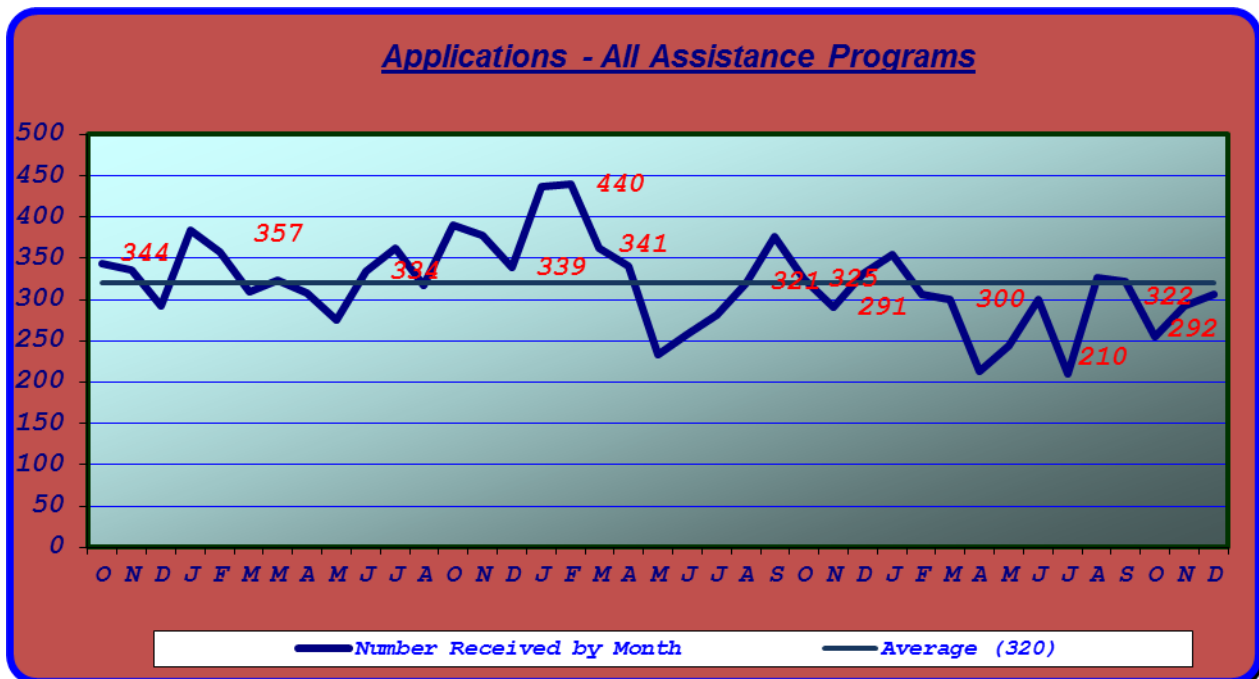
Quarter Ending: December 31, 2015

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, 2015. 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.

I. WELFARE TO WORK & PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DIVISION

A. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

In February 2014, the Department received 440 applications for economic assistance. More than half of those were for the Medi-Cal program. Since that high count, the number of applications has gradually dropped to a point where the monthly case count has been close to or below the 320 per month average. Slow improvements in the local economy have lessened the need for economic assistance and we may have reached the saturation point for the Medi-Cal program meaning those who are eligible have applied for and been put on the program.



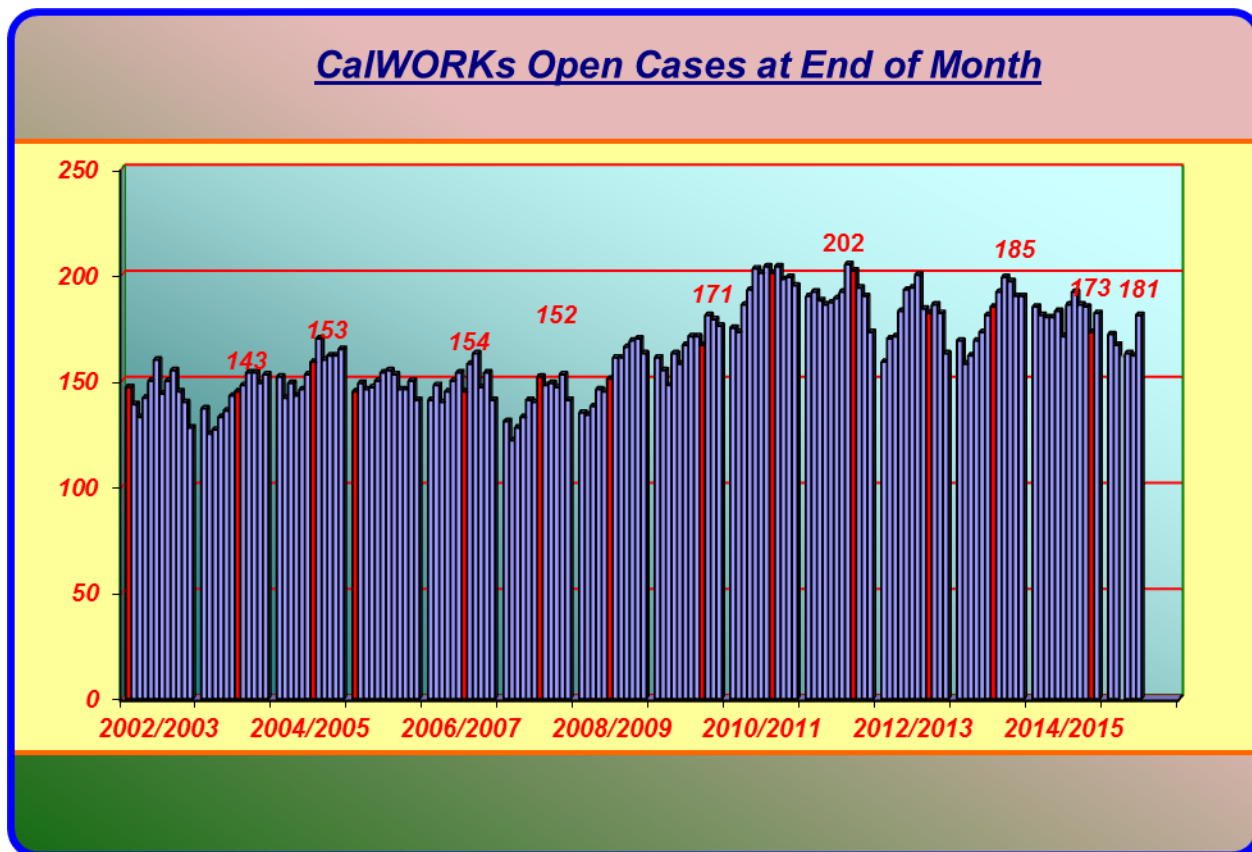
B. CONTINUING CASES

(1). Cash Assistance (AFDC/CalWORKs)

In February of 2012, the Department recorded 202 CalWORKs cases receiving cash assistance. Since that time, the trend line for this program has been downward, with the most pronounced downward trend occurring since March of 2013. While case counts have not dropped to the pre-recession levels of 150 cases per month, the evidence suggests that the case counts are permanently headed in a downward direction because the highest case counts tend to occur during the winter.

Average Monthly Caseload

2013/2014	180
2014/2015	182
2015/2016	168



(2). CalFresh (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Assistance

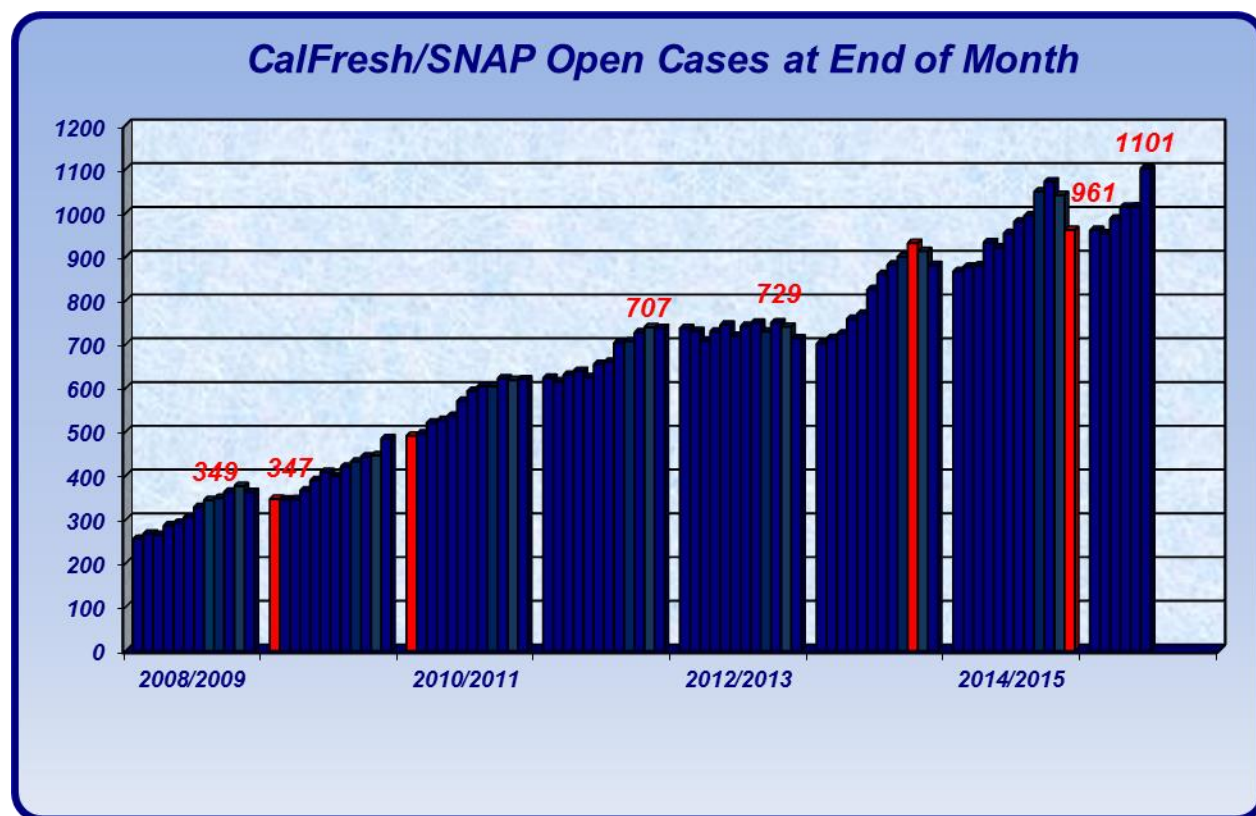
A. Case Count

The Department continues to watch this program closely as it is likely the best indicator of both short term and longer term changes in economic conditions. While there was a spike in the case count in December, the Department notes that when that spike is compared to the months prior, it appears to be more of an anomaly, particularly in view of the fact that short term caseload growth is typical in winter months.

In addition, we have noted that some of the growth in this case count accompanies the growth in the Medi-Cal program. As has been noted previously, the Department is finding that many eligible customers, who in the past may not have accessed CalFresh are doing so now. This includes increases in customers who are over 55 and disabled populations who used to “get by” without assistance even though many of them were eligible for it. Increases in food prices along with decreases in buying power have led many of those individuals to access the program.

Average Monthly Caseload

2013/2014	822
2014/2015	961
2015/2016	1005

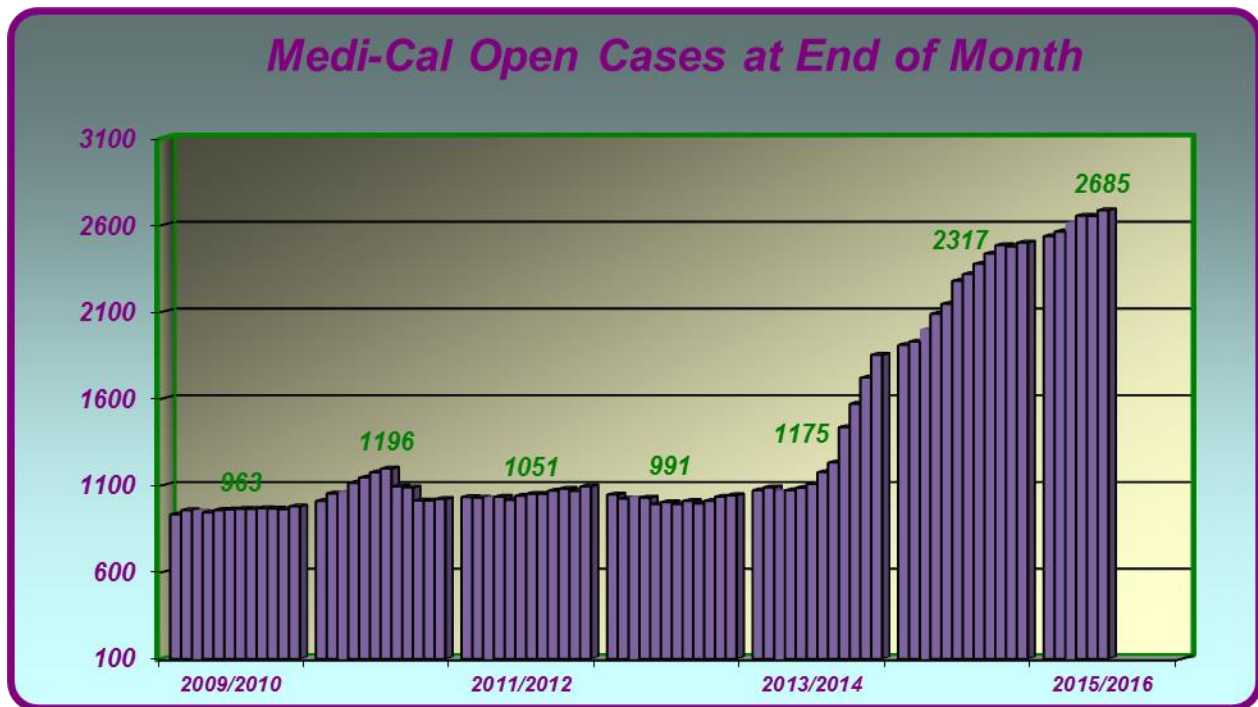


(3). Medi-Cal

The case count for the Medi-Cal program topped out at a count of 2,685 at the end of December. The Department notes that while growth continues, the trend upward has not been as steep as it was during the initial open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act (ACA). That would suggest that those individuals who did not have medical coverage prior to the ACA and are eligible for coverage under the expanded Medi-Cal program have enrolled and that we are reaching a plateau for those who are potentially uncovered. Typically, those who are eligible for the expanded Medi-Cal program have earned income that is 138% of the federal poverty level or less. For a single individual that roughly translates into hourly earnings of \$7.85 per hour or less; or about \$1,354 per month. For a family of three, annual income at 138% of poverty is \$27,730 or less.

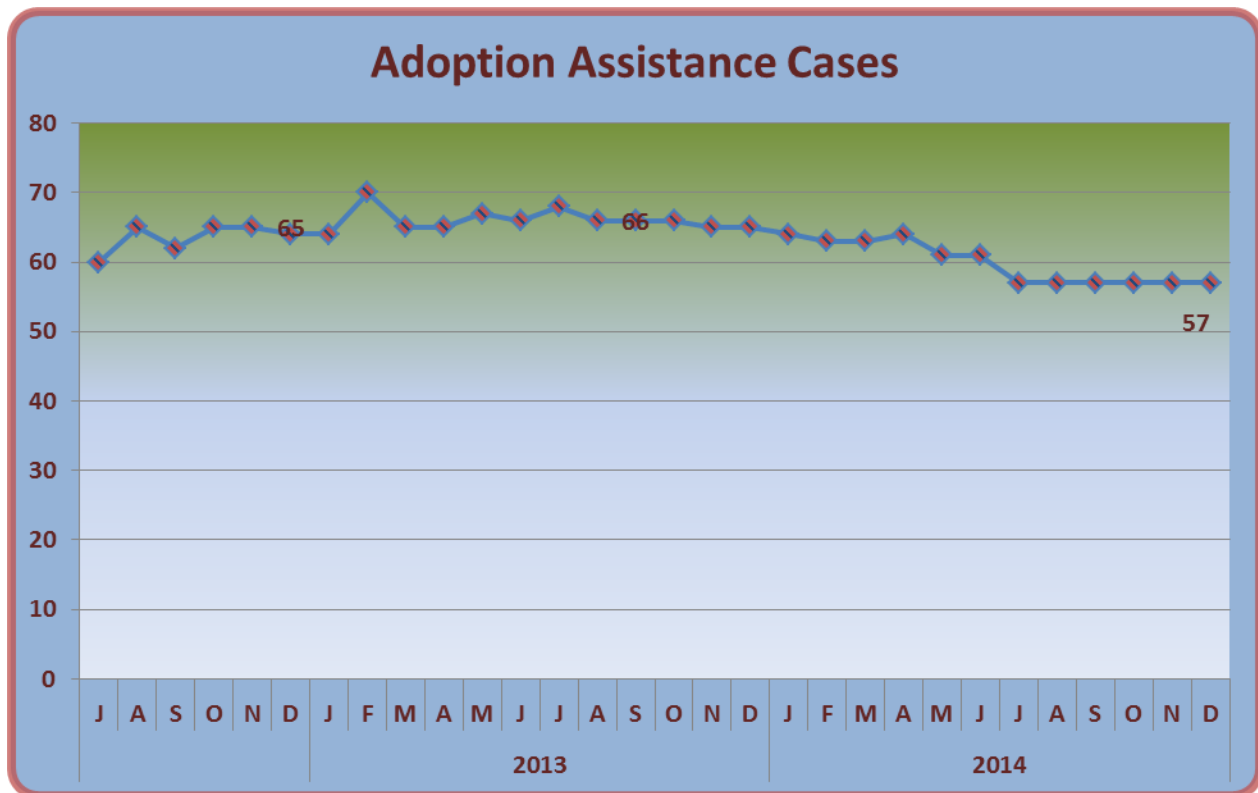
Average Monthly Caseload

2013/2014	1459
2014/2015	2245
2015/2016	2617



(4). Aid to Adoptions

In 2012 the Department of Social Services began operating the Adoptions programs. The services provided and benefits issued are mandated by Welfare and Institutions Code under Chapter 2.1 beginning at Section 16115. Services provided include home studies, training for adoptive parents and case management of adoptive placements. Adoptive families also qualify for cash assistance under the Aid to Adoptions program. The caseload for the Adoptions Program has dropped to 57 children receiving Aid To Adoptions.

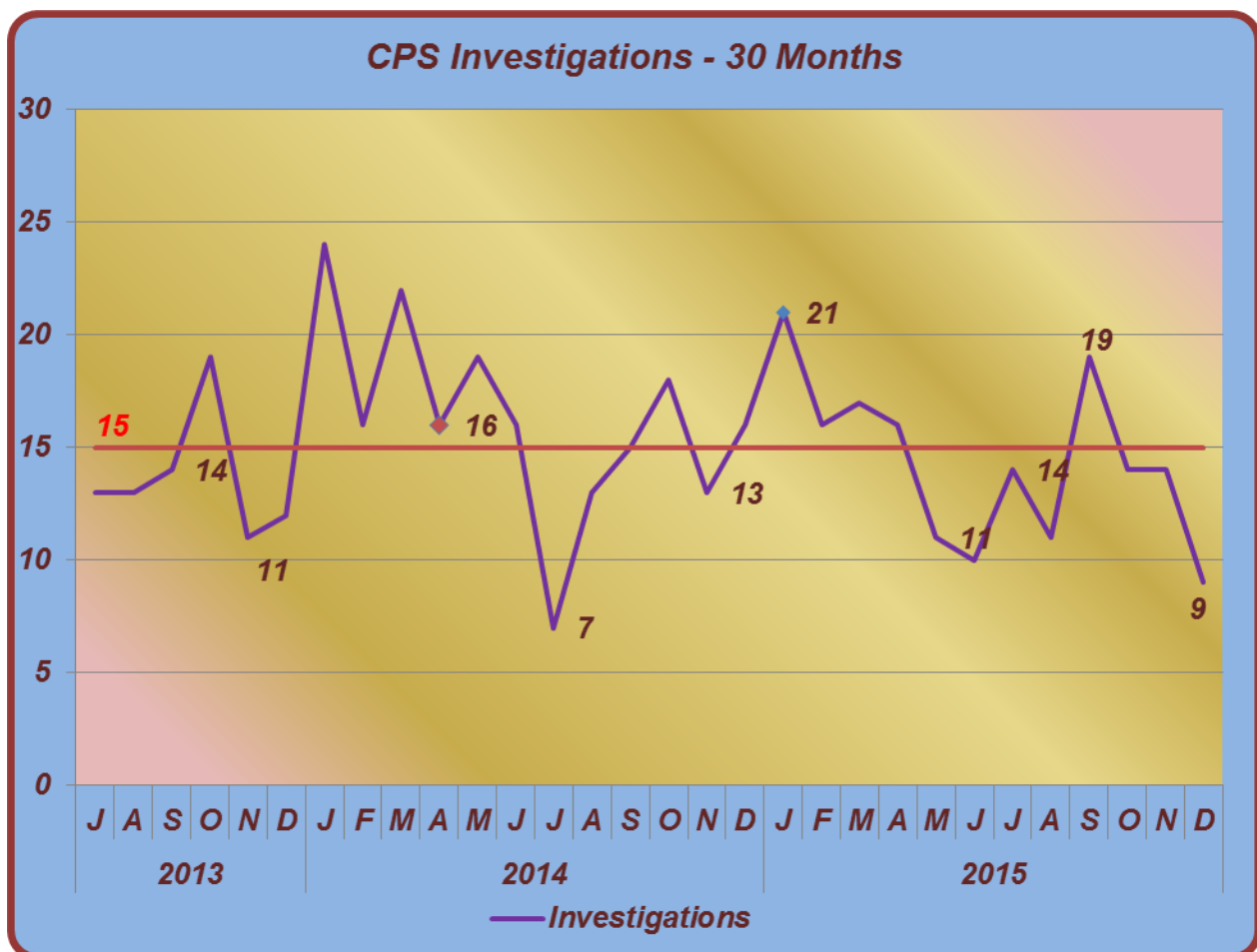


II. SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

A. Child Welfare Services

The Emergency Response component of Child Protective Services averages about 15 child abuse investigations per month. In September the Department investigated 19 cases of suspected child abuse. Since many of the referrals we receive for investigation come from school personnel it would not be surprising to receive higher numbers of referrals during September, when school reopens.

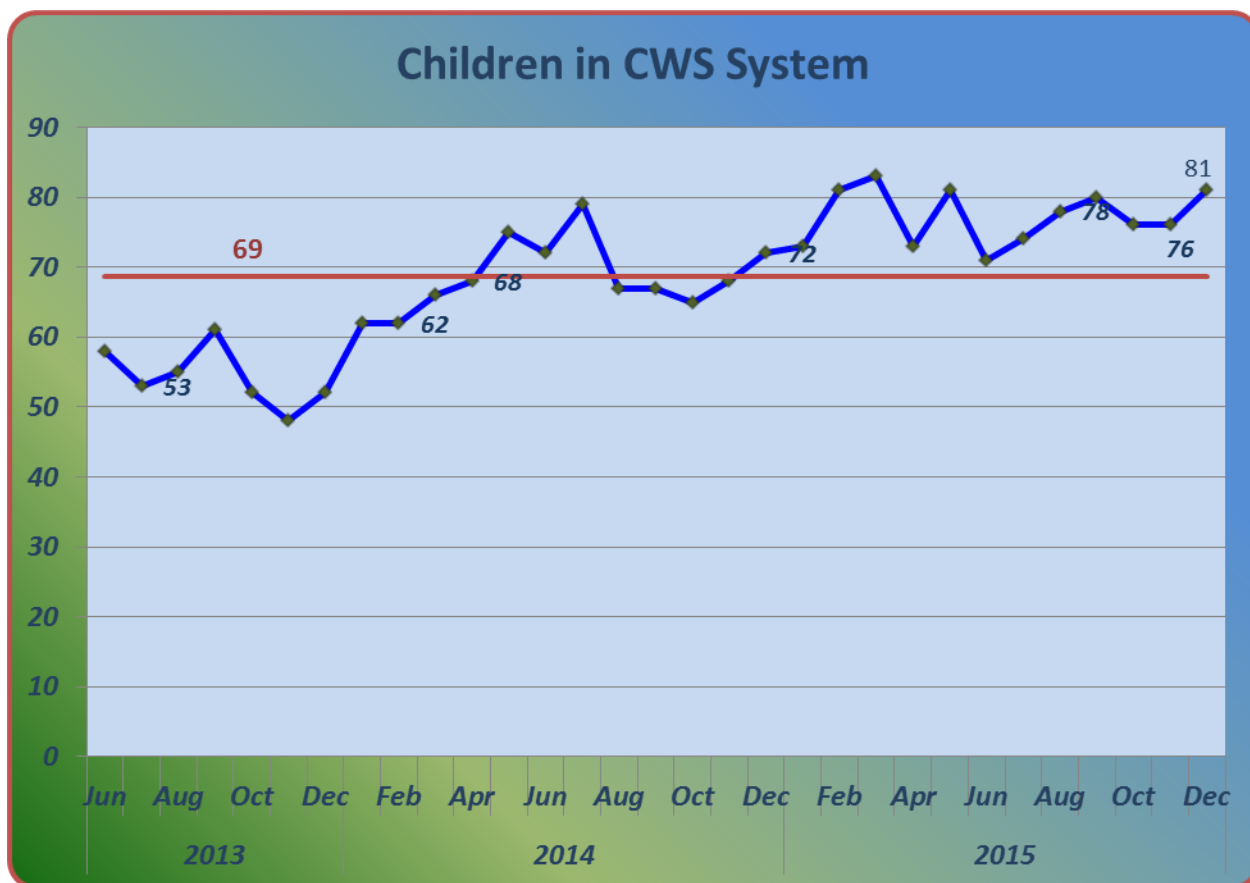
As the Department has noted previously, we have continued to experience significant numbers of cases where the precipitating factors leading to abuse and neglect are associated with substance abuse, in particular methamphetamine but also alcohol and other drugs. Substance abuse is the foremost reason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



B. Children in the Child Welfare Services System

As has been reported previously, under changes in the law associated with Assembly Bill 12 of 2012, some children will stay in the Child Welfare System longer so that they can complete their education or secure independent housing. Currently the Department has 7 children who are completing an educational plan or living independently. This circumstance has generated an increase in the case count which is not directly associated with new detentions of children. Even with that in place, there has been growth in the number of children in the Child Welfare System.

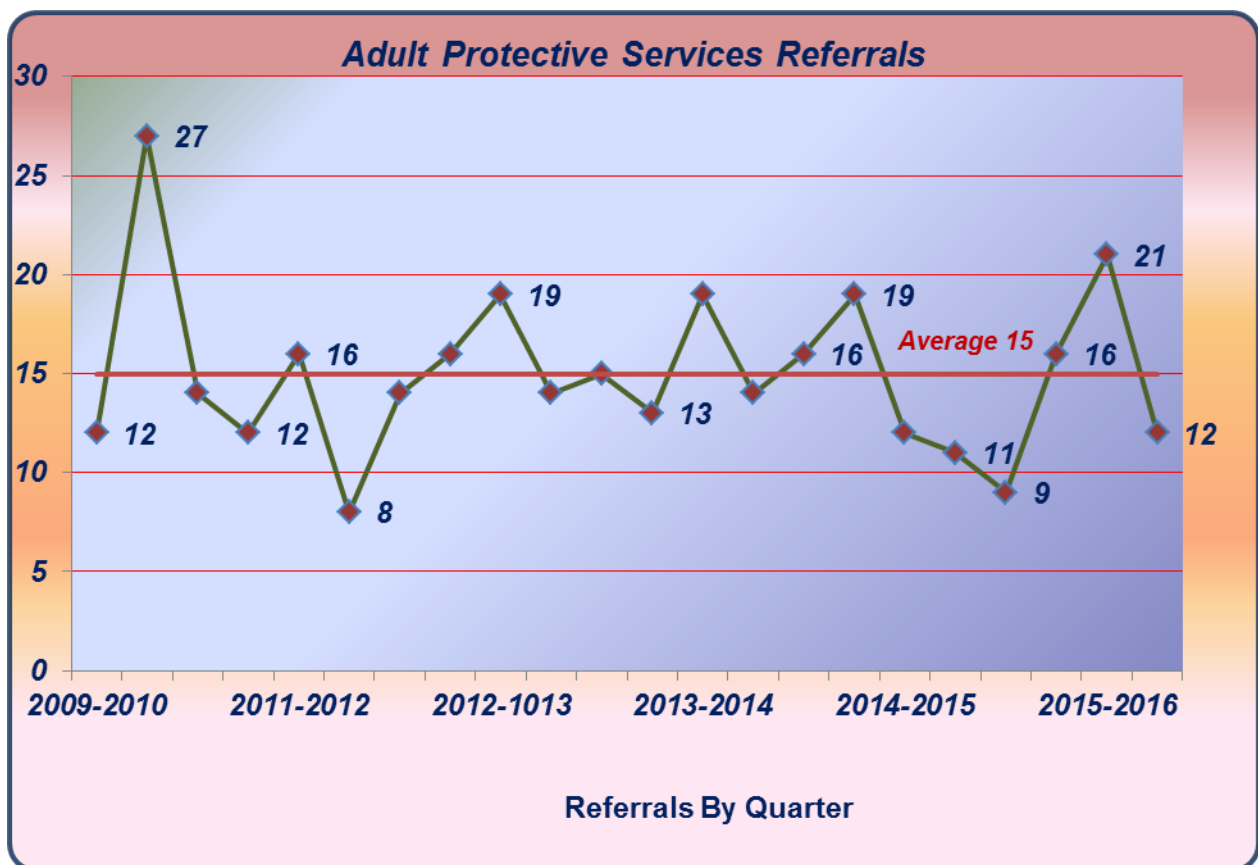
The Department has continued its trend toward placing foster children with relatives and with non-related extended family members. This has placed us in a position where we are less reliant on foster family agencies and foster homes for placement resources. While we expect that trend to continue, there remains a need for foster homes for children who come into our system. This is particularly evident when the Department detains children with special needs as there are fewer foster homes or group homes that provide the specialized care needed by these children.



C. Adult Protective Services

Referrals for investigation of adults who've been abused or neglected generally have ranged from a high count of 21 during the July through September quarter to 12 during the most recent quarter. The average rate has been about 15 referrals per quarter.

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.



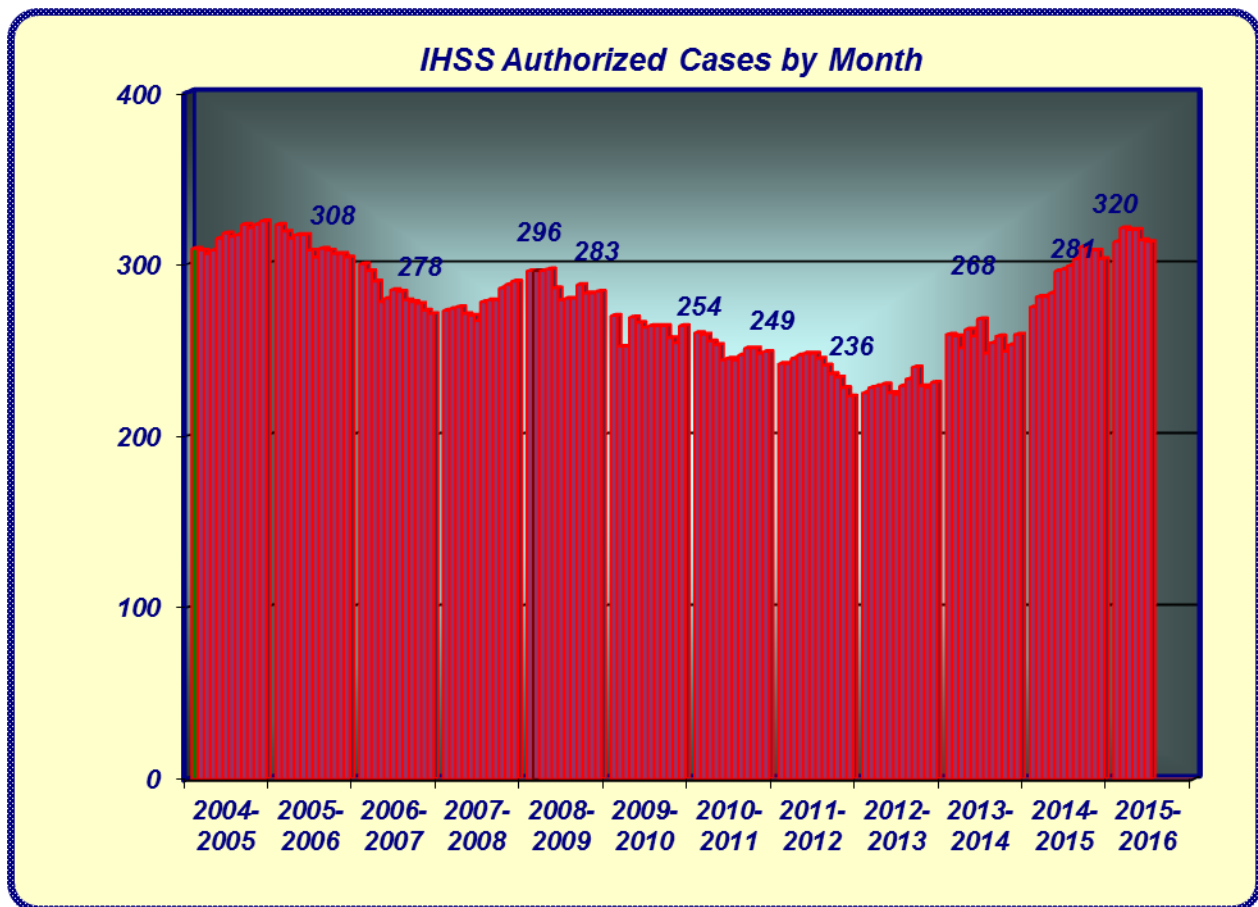
D. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

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

2013/2014	256
2014/2015	295
2015/2016	317



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.