

Wyoming Department of Family Services
FY2011 Annual Report

General Information

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Agency Contact

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Other Locations

Afton, Buffalo, Casper, Cheyenne, Cody, Douglas, Evanston, Gillette, Glenrock, Greybull, Jackson, Kemmerer, Lander, Laramie, Lovell, Lusk, Lyman, Newcastle, Pinedale, Powell, Rawlins, Riverton, Rock Springs, Sheridan, Sundance, Thermopolis, Torrington, Wheatland and Worland

Statutory References

Wyo. Stat. §§ 9-2-2101 through 9-2-2105; 14-3-201 through 14-3-204; 14-6-201 through 14-9-108; 20-6-101 through 20-6-222; and 42-2-101 through 42-3-103.

Clients Served

Children, families or individuals in need of economic assistance, as defined by legislatively-authorized programs, families in need of preventative services, youth in state care, seniors or vulnerable adults in need of protective services, children at risk for abuse or neglect, and individuals or families utilizing licensed child care providers.

Budget Information

DFS' operating budget is a mix of funding from the state's general fund, federal funds and money collected in fees and in the form of restitution from public assistance fraud cases. The total operating budget for the department for FY 11-12 was \$279,254,858

Report Period

FY11 (July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011)

Wyoming Quality of Life Result

Wyoming families and individuals live in a stable, safe, supportive, nurturing, healthy environment.

Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life

The Department of Family Services (DFS) helps families in crisis, children and adults at-risk of abuse or neglect and juveniles in trouble through the following six programs:

1. Assistance - Determining eligibility for public benefits and time-limited economic assistance programs in order to help families meet their basic needs
2. Investigation – Investigating reports of child or adult abuse, neglect or exploitation with the goals of early intervention and prevention
3. Service planning and delivery - working with families, children in family foster care or juveniles in crisis to assess needs and provide assistance or needed interventions

4. Monitoring – auditing, control and compliance efforts to ensure DFS and citizens receive quality and value for contracted services
5. Certification - developing rules and processes to ensure quality out-of-home care for children
6. Collections and Recovery - assisting families with obtaining a livable income and maintaining the integrity of public assistance programs within the DFS

Basic Facts

The Department of Family Services consists of 812 employees in four main services areas: Economic Assistance (220), Juvenile and Child Protective Services (530), and Child Support Enforcement (34), Early Childhood Development (28). DFS has 28 field offices located in all 23 counties.

Funding: The total operating budget for the department for FY 11-12 was \$279,254,858. Of this amount \$166,540,280 are general funds and \$102,349,138 and \$ 10,365,440 are other funds (central registry fees, Children’s Trust Fund, heating assistance, welfare fraud and overpayment recovery, etc).

Division Budgets:

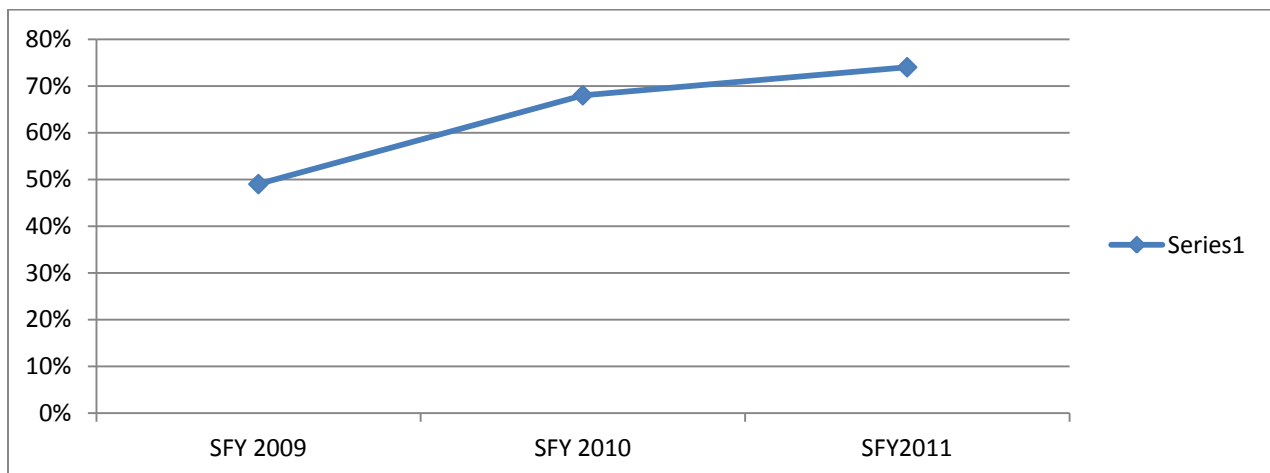
Child Support: \$23,627,574	Juvenile Services: \$82,125,312
Economic Assistance: \$73,228,826	Protective Services: \$60,926,331
Early Childhood Development: \$38,878,443	Director: 468,372

Performance

Performance measures that are important to the work of DFS include the following:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Penetration Rates
- Absence of Repeat Maltreatment for Child Abuse or Neglect
- Foster Care Placement with Relatives
- Point in Time Placements by Child Welfare Program
- Number of Out-of-Home Child Care Slots/Child Care Capacity
- Percentage of Child Support Collections
- Adult Protective Services: Accepted Reports Statewide

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Penetration Rates: 100% of Federal Poverty Level SFY 2010-2011



Story behind the last year of performance:

SNAP Penetration Rates: From June, 2010 to June, 2011, SNAP participation in Wyoming has been steadily between 72 and 77 percent. The actual increase in SNAP *households* in this time period is 5.89 percent, and the increase in the number of *participants* is 9.47 percent. The SNAP participation rate is a federal performance measure showing a State’s effectiveness at reaching the program goal of reducing hunger and improving nutrition among low-income households.

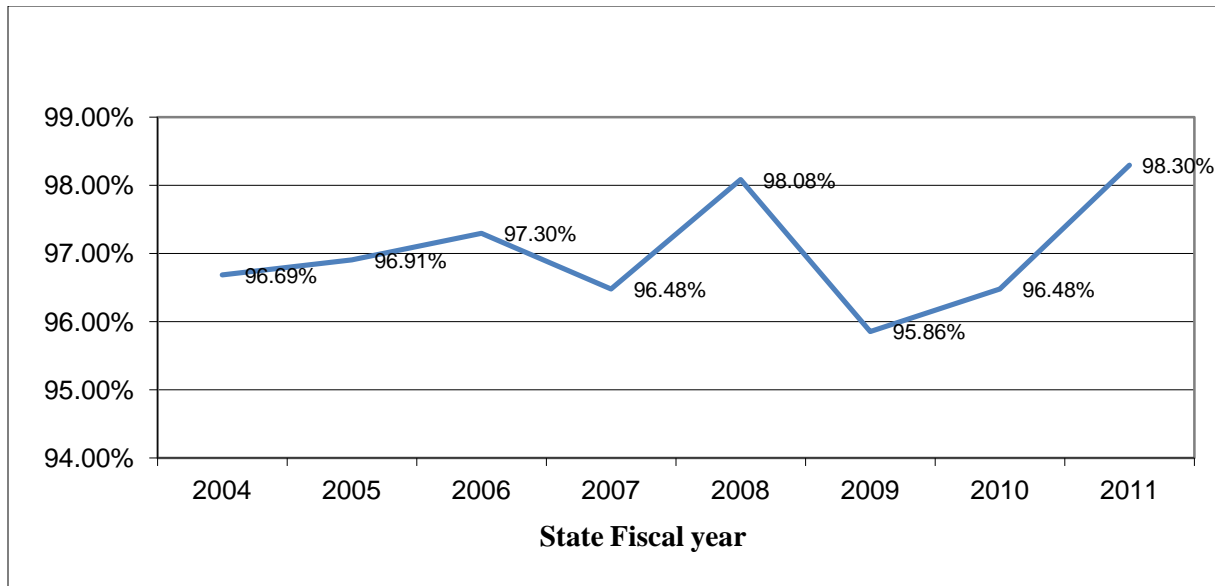
What is being done to improve performance?

Program access is critical to the success of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The measure looks at the number of people receiving SNAP benefits compared to the number of people living below 100 percent of the poverty level. Decreasing barriers and increasing participation in SNAP can ultimately lead to increased food security among low-income families.

Economic conditions and rising unemployment contribute to the need for public assistance, and as a result, caseloads have risen. In response to these rising numbers, DFS is addressing workload and policy simplification to maintain or improve timely and accurate eligibility determination.

Over the next year, DFS will also reassess its eligibility policies and processes in order to consider streamlining and IT initiatives that can improve efficiency and customer service and reduce workloads.

Absence of Repeat Maltreatment for Children Substantiated for Abuse or Neglect, 2004-2011



Story behind the last year of performance:

Absence of Repeat Maltreatment: There was a decrease in the number of children who experienced repeat child abuse from SFY 2009 to 2011. This trend parallels efforts to more proactively assess underlying causes of maltreatment and improve prevention.

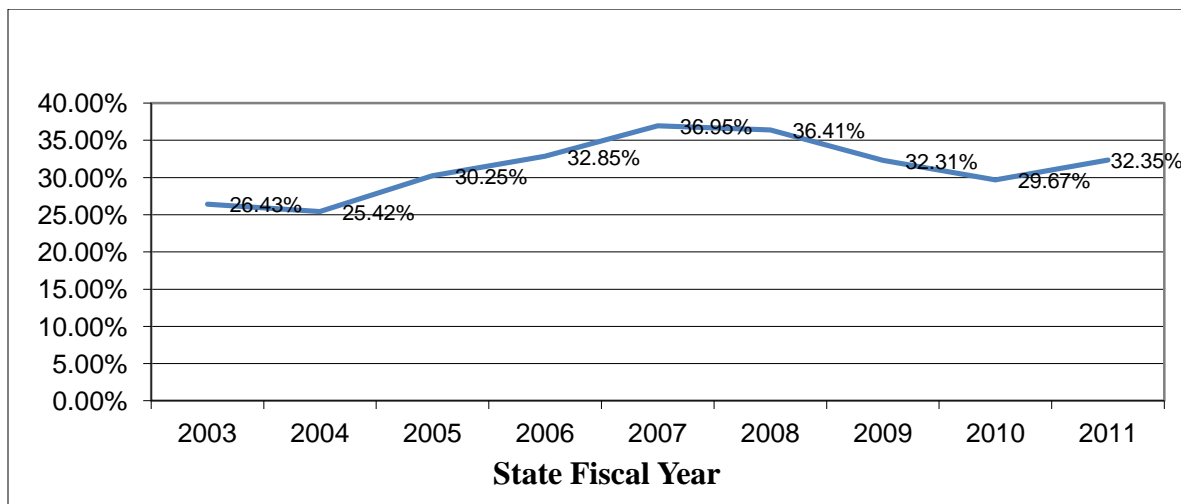
What is being done to improve performance?

Wyoming now exceeds national standards for safety of children in out-of-home placement. A significant percentage of repeat maltreatment occurs in out-of-home care, including residential and group home facilities. This type of repeat maltreatment began to decline as DFS instituted new investigation practices, both in its Early Childhood and Protective Services Divisions. There are four overall action steps being implemented to address the underlying issues of repeat maltreatment:

- The first is the implementation of new special investigation policies and training. New policies more clearly establish accountabilities for investigative/response teams and allow administrators to participate in corrective action plans. New practices require coordination between Protective Services, Juvenile Services and the Early Childhood Divisions. Institutional abuse/neglect is also staffed at the administrative level. The result is more robust and effective investigations and corrective actions that address the most significant safety issues.
- A second is to add provisions in contracts with out-of-home care providers that require full implementation of corrective action where children have been repeatedly placed at risk.
- The third includes the immediate referral and review of all appropriate incident reports by Child Protective Services (CPS) for follow-up or to ensure compliance.
- The fourth has been stricter corrective action plans where needed.

DFS will continue to work with facilities, communities and other departments to address on-going safety and well-being issues. Two of those areas are 1) broad admission policies in congregate care facilities that result in housing serious juvenile offenders with low-risk offenders or children with mental health needs, and 2) policies and training for restraint and seclusion.

Foster Care Placement with Relatives, 2003-2011



Story behind the last year of performance:

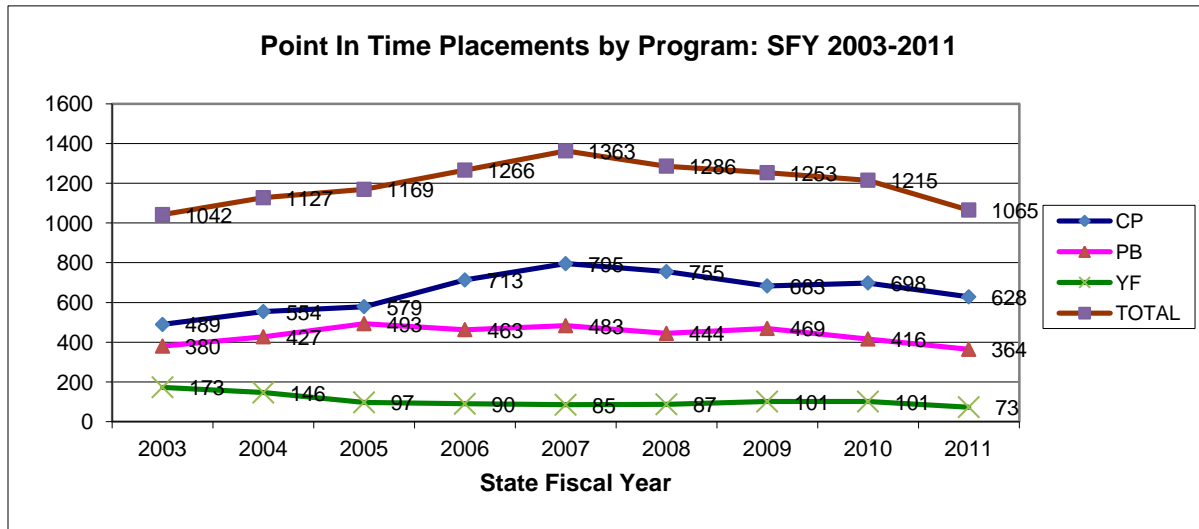
Relative Placement: Since 2010, there has been an increase in the percentage of children placed with relatives. DFS policy, procedures and training support the practice of kinship care, thereby reducing

trauma associated with removing a child from the home. This effort also benefits children by maintaining the continuity of family relationships. DFS is committed to placing children with appropriate relatives and providing support services to those placements whenever it is in the best interest of the child.

What is being done to improve performance?

Over the past several years, DFS instituted training and vendor support to perform diligent searches to identify suitable relatives when out-of-home placement is necessary. This process allows DFS to find most kin and notify them of a child’s out-of-home placement within 30 days. This process also allows DFS to engage biological or extended family in identifying service options or other ways the relatives can provide support to the child and his/her family from the very beginning of the case. DFS has worked with the Children’s Justice Project and the Guardian Ad-Litem (GAL) Program to provide continuing education to DFS staff, GALs, courts and other professionals on the importance of placing children with relatives and how communities can help children succeed when placed with relatives.

Wyoming Children in Out-of-Home Care, 2003-2011



Story behind the last year of performance:

Placements by Program: The number of children in out-of-home placement, as measured in point-in-time placements in foster care, has declined since 2010. The decline coincides with efforts of DFS staff and communities to keep children in their own homes whenever it is safe to do so. It also coincides with more robust community planning efforts for services and alternatives to juvenile detention. The categories noted to the right of the chart, above, include CP=child protection; PB=juvenile probation; and YF=youth and family (CHINS, et al.)

What is being done to improve performance?

Community partnerships created in the last several years have identified best practices to help keep more children safely in their own homes and communities, to decrease lengths of stay in out-of-home care and shorten times to achieve permanency.

Over the past two years, 17 counties have voluntarily initiated various levels of Community Juvenile Service Boards following new, enabling legislation in 2008. The purpose of the Boards is to plan for better intake and diversion, better juvenile detention practices and community service alternatives to detention and placement. In 2010, Wyoming also began participation in the Annie E. Casey Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, which provides education on best practices and alternative service development, of which three counties are participating.

In 2007-10, Wyoming’s two most populous counties, Laramie and Natrona, participated in the American Bar Association “Barriers” project to speed adoption and reduce court delay for children in the legal system. The Wyoming Supreme Court’s Children’s Justice Project also sponsored pilot projects to reduce child welfare court delays in Albany, Sweetwater and Carbon counties.

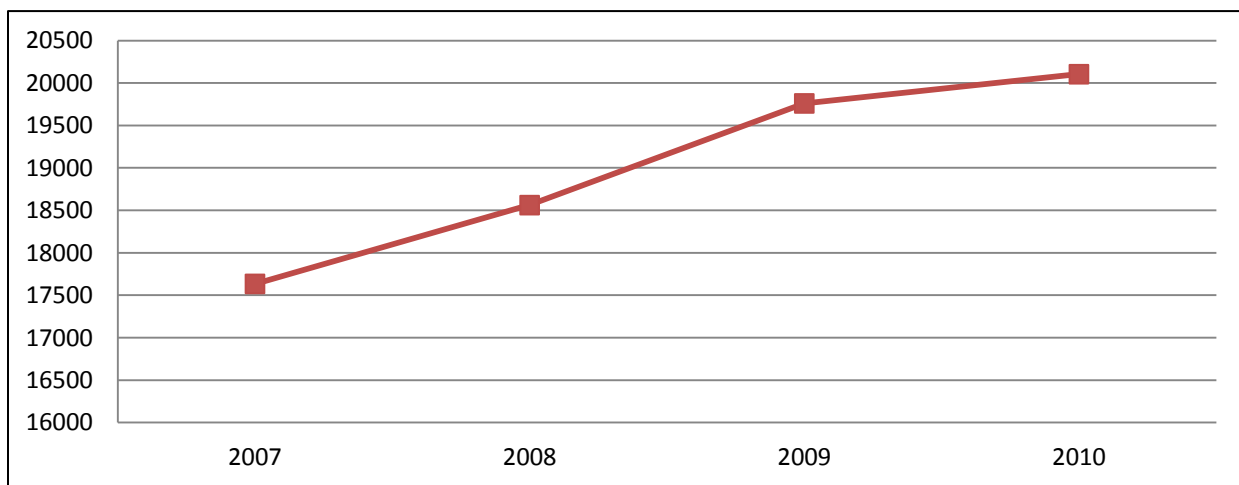
The Safety and Risk Assessment Project, which was a partnership between DFS, the Casey Foundation, and American Humane, helped DFS review and improve the DFS safety and risk assessment process in Cheyenne, Gillette and Casper. The expanded capacity to identify, isolate, and engage the family in resolving safety and risk concerns in the opening days of DFS interaction often decreases the chance of the child being removed from the home. The practices identified through this project are in the process of being incorporated into policy.

In 2008, DFS completed statewide implementation of a science-based assessment instrument for delinquent youth entering the legal system. In 2009 and 2010, the tool was being utilized by DFS as well as law enforcement entities at the municipal and county levels that serve or manage at risk youth.

Finally, the Attorney General’s Office instituted a legal permanency unit in 2005 that continues to assist DFS and prosecuting attorneys in resolving difficult cases, particularly where terminations of parental rights become necessary.

Future initiatives will focus on prevention and involve continued improvement in family safety assessments, in-home service delivery and coordination with community and state agencies.

Number of Out-of-Home Child Care Slots: Wyoming Child Care Capacity



Story behind the last year of performance:

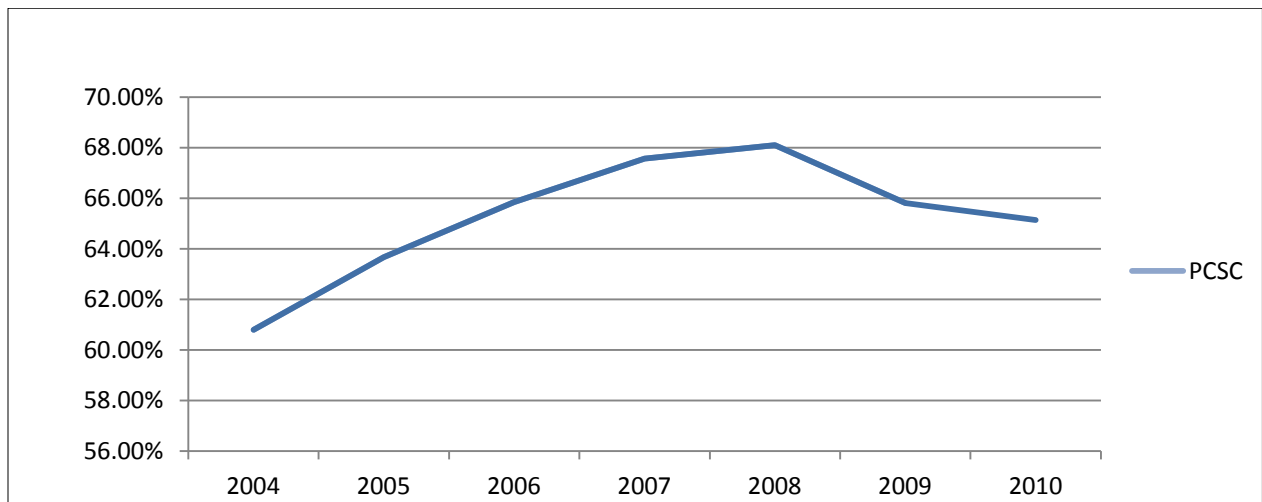
Number of Out-of-Home Child Care Slots: Wyoming continues to show increases in the number of child care slots, however there are still shortages of infant and other slots in some areas of the state for non-traditional hours.

What is being done to improve performance?

The demand for licensed child care slots is driven mostly by economic growth, but the increase in licensed child care capacity can also be attributed to a multi-pronged approach that includes on-site technical assistance from the Early Childhood Divisions’ licensing staff and business training from DFS and Workforce Services to increase the sustainability of child care programs.

DFS will continue to work closely with child care providers by offering them technical assistance and training, which helps reduce the number of providers that leave the field. DFS also works cooperatively with others involved in the licensing process, such as local fire and sanitation inspectors, to reduce duplication and make licensing processes less impactful. This inter-agency collaboration resulted in the development of online training to help providers meet their annual training requirements for licensing. Additionally, DFS has funded the “Providers Empowering Providers” program to build networks of family home providers which provide additional peer support, training and technical assistance. This strategy also helps to reduce the number of providers leaving the field.

Percentage of Current Child Support Collections, 2004-2010



Story behind the last year performance:

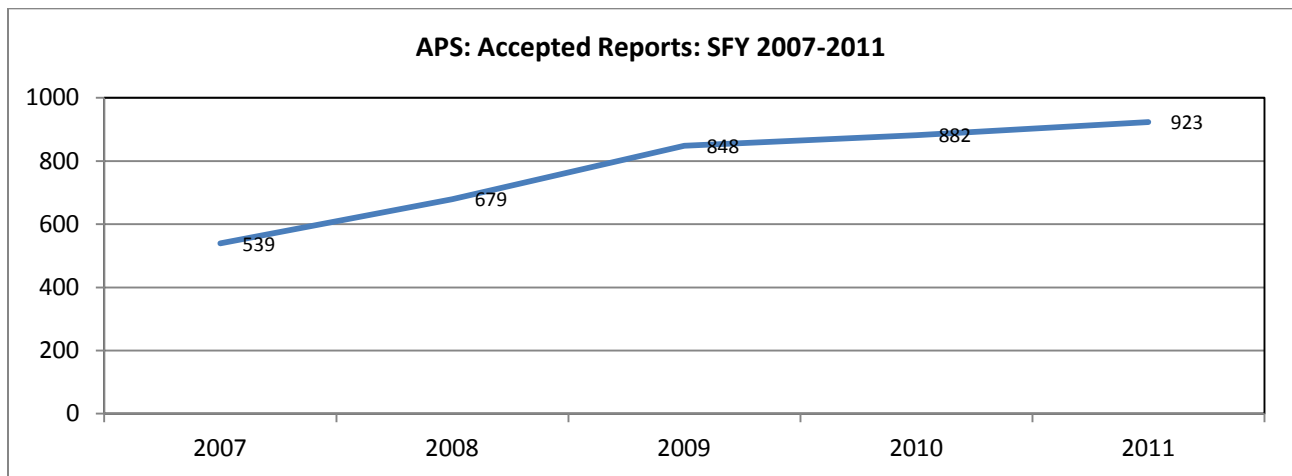
Percentage of Current Support Collections: This graph represents the percentage measure of the amount of current (monthly) child support collected by DFS’ Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Division, divided by the total amount of current (monthly) child support owed in that same pool of cases. All funds collected in this measure are distributed to clients in cases being enforced by the Child Support Enforcement Division of DFS.

What is being done to improve performance?

Wyoming continues to exceed the national average for helping families achieve a livable income. The child support office continues to use performance-based contracts and has increased communication between state and county districts in order to increase child support dollars collected. In fact, \$69.3 million in child support payments were collected by the Wyoming CSE program from parents during State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2011, an increase in collections from SFY 2010 (\$67 million). This was in spite of the downturn in the national economy.

Collections for CSE have improved over the years as a result of increased use of state and federal automated data sources, performance-based service contracts, and more sophisticated enforcement tools such as new hire reporting by employers. Financial institution data matches for bank account seizure, passport denial, and lump sum insurance settlement intercept have also been improved or initiated. DFS continues its support of parental visitation services after recognizing an increase in the likelihood a non-custodial parent will make support payments as ordered by the court. This is done by supporting community efforts through grant funding used to help non-custodial parents understand child support and visitation issues better.

Adult Protective Services: Accepted Reports Statewide, 2007-2011



Story behind the last year performance:

Adult Protective Services: Accepted Reports Statewide: DFS has seen steady growth in the number of intakes (cases accepted for review) in the interest of vulnerable adults, a population that includes elders as well as disabled and developmentally delayed people. The growth in the number of reports of abuse and neglect are attributable to increased community involvement. Each of the state's 23 counties has an APS team in place to network and locate community based resources to assist victims and families to remediate the vulnerable adult's circumstances.

What is being done to improve performance?

The growth in the number of reports of abuse and neglect are attributable to increased community involvement. Each of the state’s 23 counties has an APS team in place to network and locate community based resources to assist victims and families to remediate the vulnerable adult’s circumstances.

Increased reports also coincide with the growth in the aging population of Wyoming, as well as the increased awareness that Wyoming statutorily identifies persons in various occupations that are mandatory reporters for adult abuse. The rise in reports coincides with DFS’ efforts to provide on-going statewide training to communities, including law enforcement, about what constitutes adult abuse and neglect, state reporting requirements, and the availability of local resources to assist with APS cases. In addition, DFS now has 25 APS community teams (23 counties/Park and Sublette County each have two) and four designated workers who team with community leaders to improve awareness, support vulnerable adults, facilitate and participate in family partnerships to remediate abuse and neglect issues.

Consistent with the types of community-centered, state-supported initiatives described for child welfare previously in this plan, DFS will focus on initiatives that seek to improve education, safety assessments, community partnerships and prevention.

DFS Organizational Chart, 2011

