

Making it Happen Together: *Improving Child Welfare Outcomes through the Maricopa County Safe Reduction Initiative*

Child Abuse Prevention Conference
July 2016

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Court Administrator

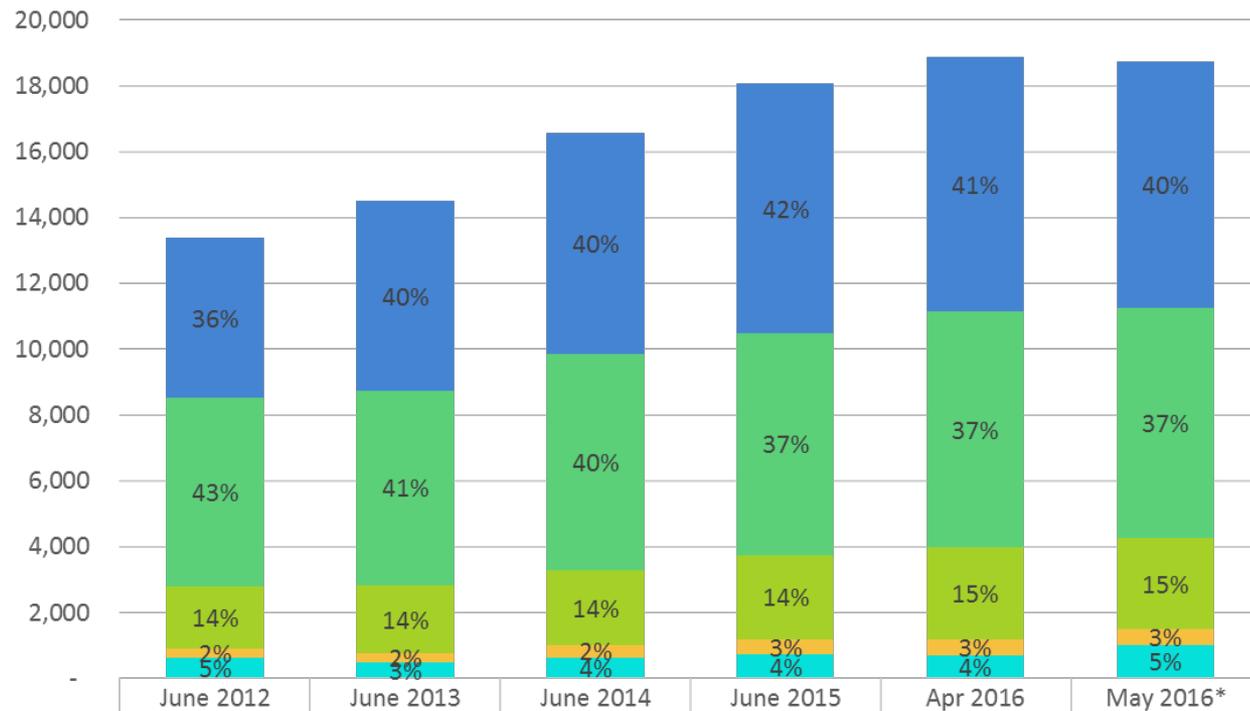
Welcome to Maricopa County's Safe Reduction Initiative



What is Your Role?

- **Table Exercise**

Numbers are Staggering: What story does the data tell?

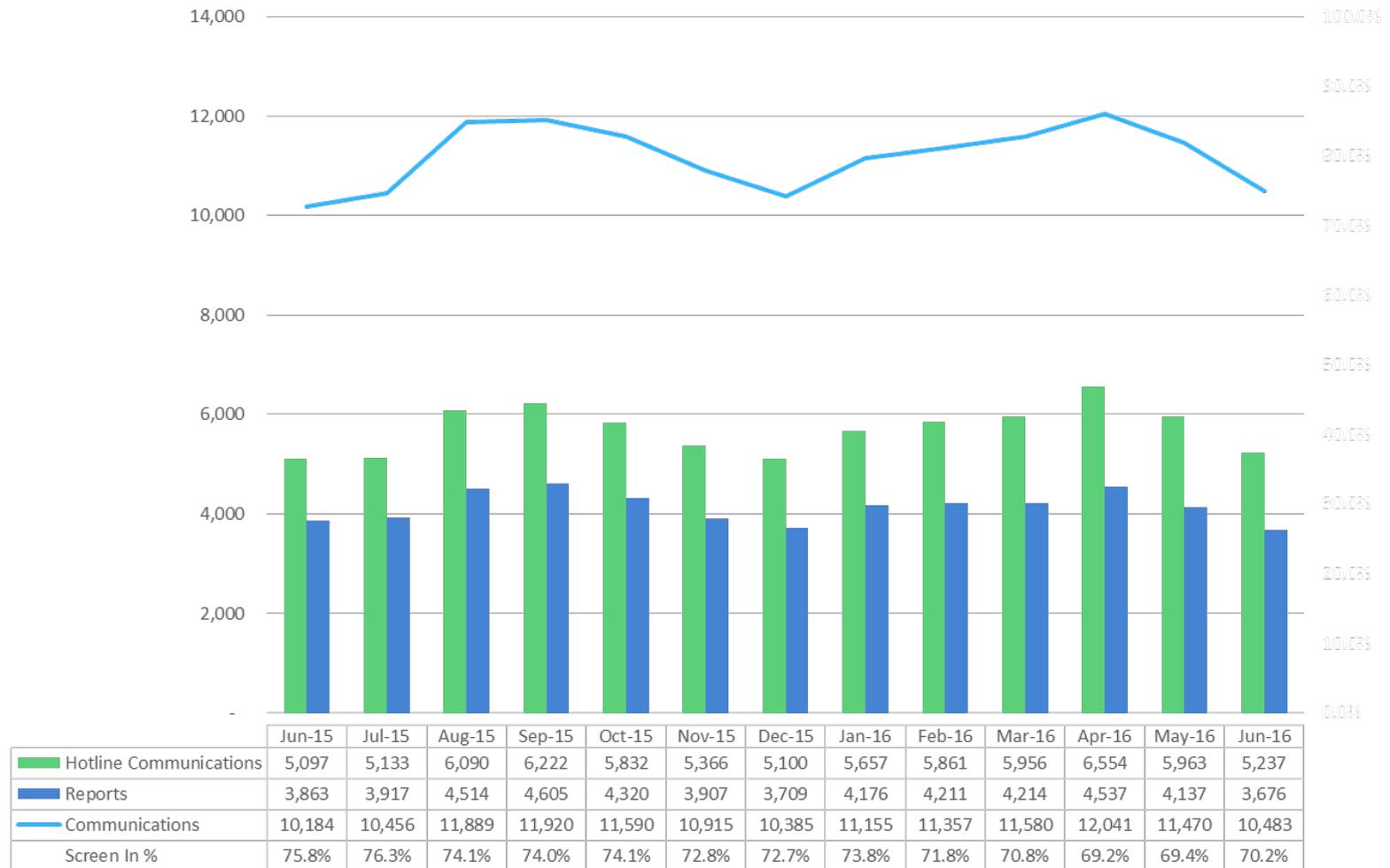


■ Unlicensed (Primarily Kinship)	4,868	5,748	6,693	7,558	7,722	7,499
■ Foster Care	5,728	5,908	6,592	6,762	7,156	7,003
■ Congregate Care	1,893	2,081	2,246	2,535	2,795	2,748
■ Independent Living	272	252	381	485	496	485
■ Other	624	505	644	719	692	1,015
Total in Out-of-Home Care	13,385	14,494	16,556	18,059	18,861	18,750

NOTE: May 2016 data is preliminary
 Data Source: DCS Monthly Out-of-Home Care Report, 6.20.16

Communications & Reports to the Hotline

The number of reports has increased 23% over the last five years

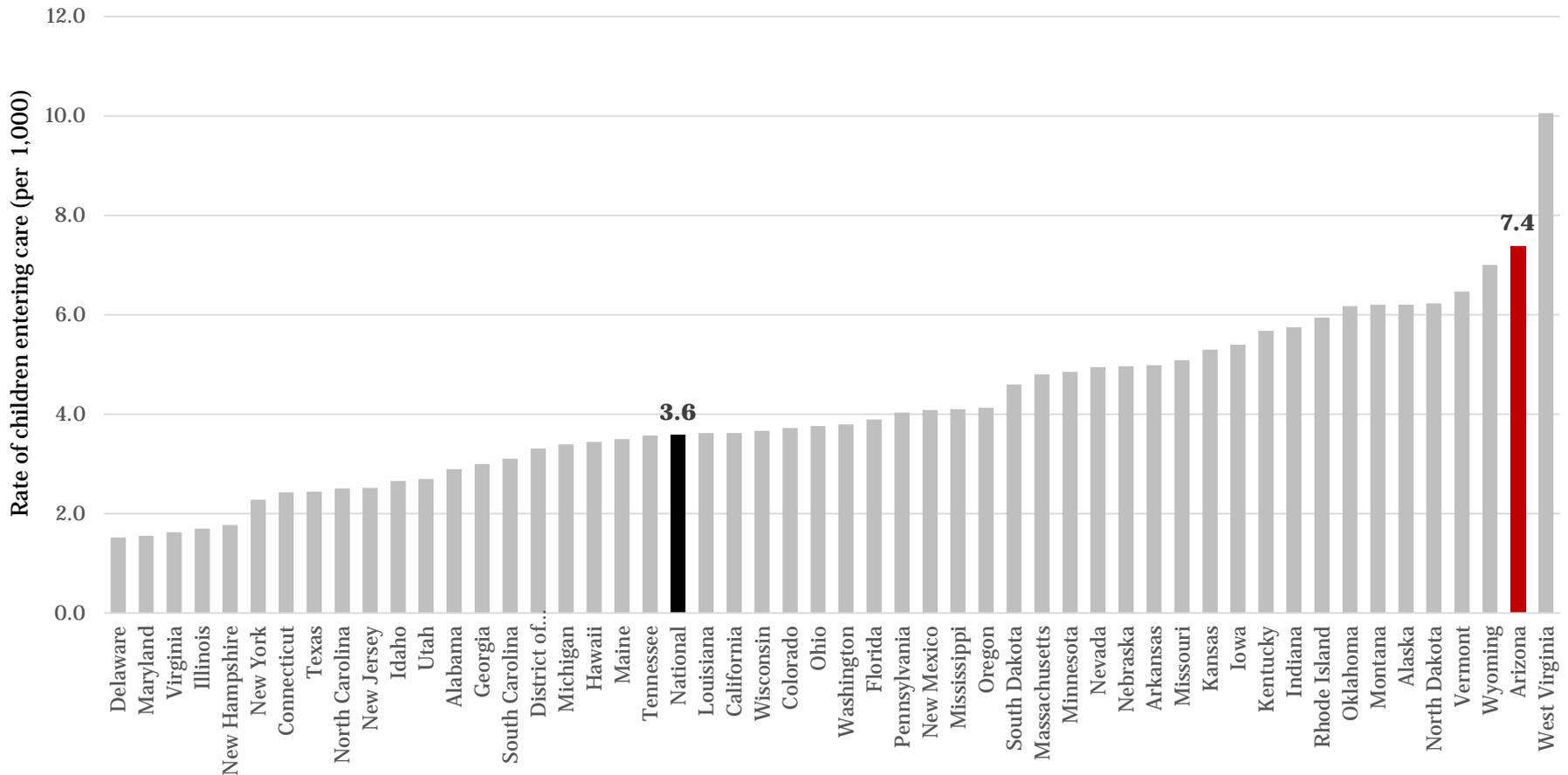


NOTE: Communications, Hotline Communications, and Reports include calls/reports that are no jurisdiction reports.
Screen In % shows reports as a percentage of total Hotline Communications.

Data Source: DCS Tableau Dashboard, Communications Received by Weekday and Hour Reports, 7.2.16

Entries/Removals by State (2014)

Entry Rates: An indicator associated with front end reduction strategies

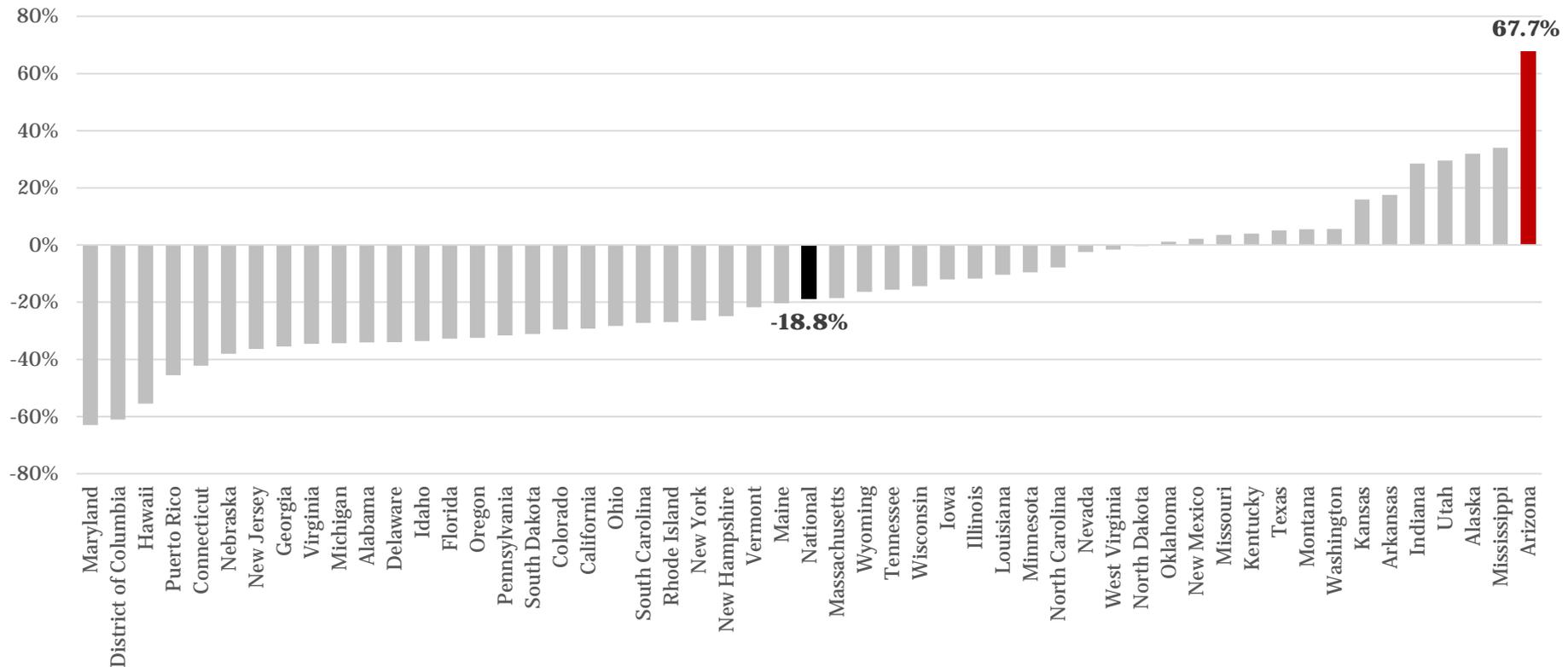


Key Statistics that Tell our Story

The majority of states have experienced a reduction in the number of children in foster care

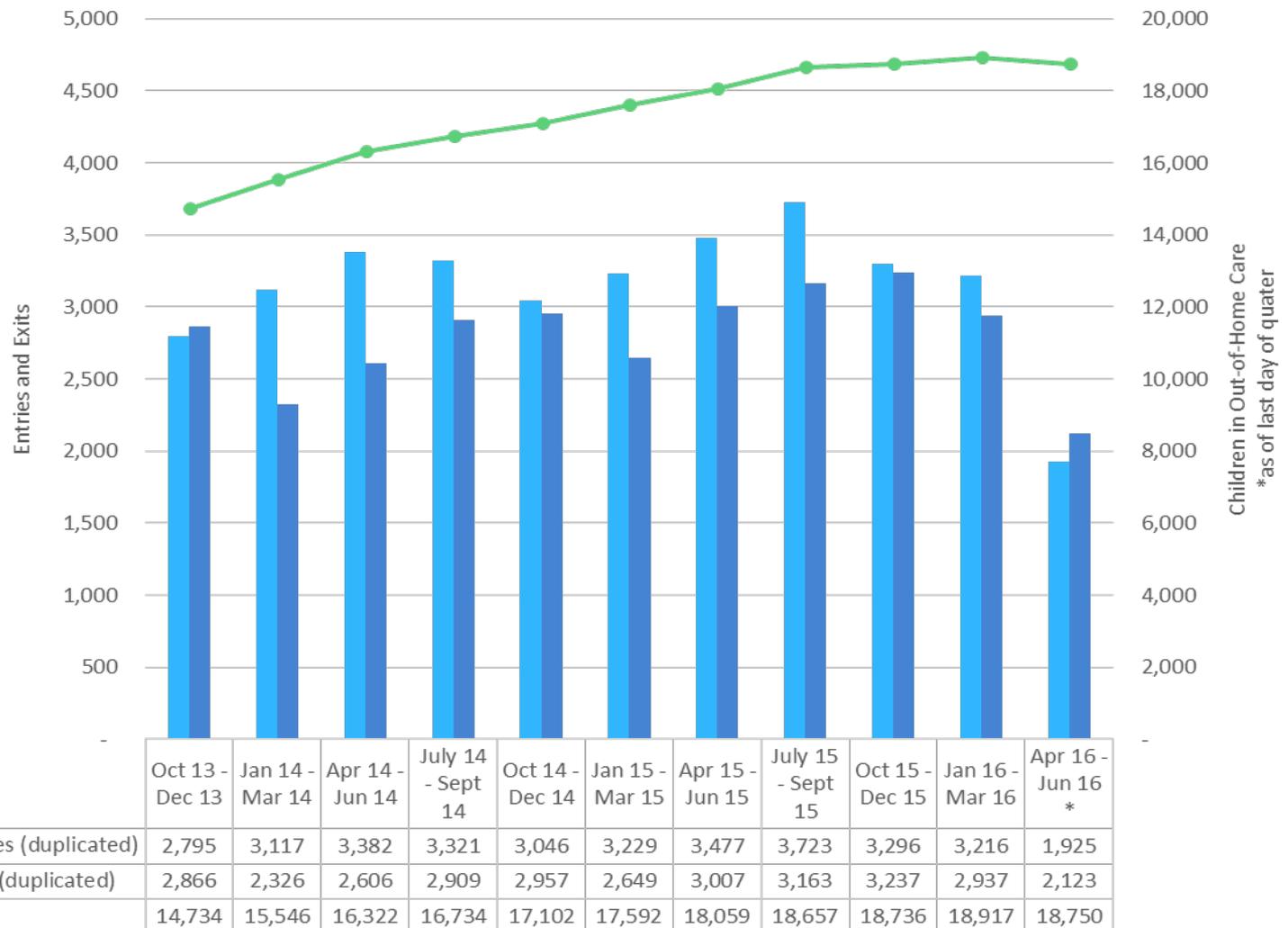
Where is Arizona?

% change in the number of out-of-home care between 9/30/05 and 9/30/14



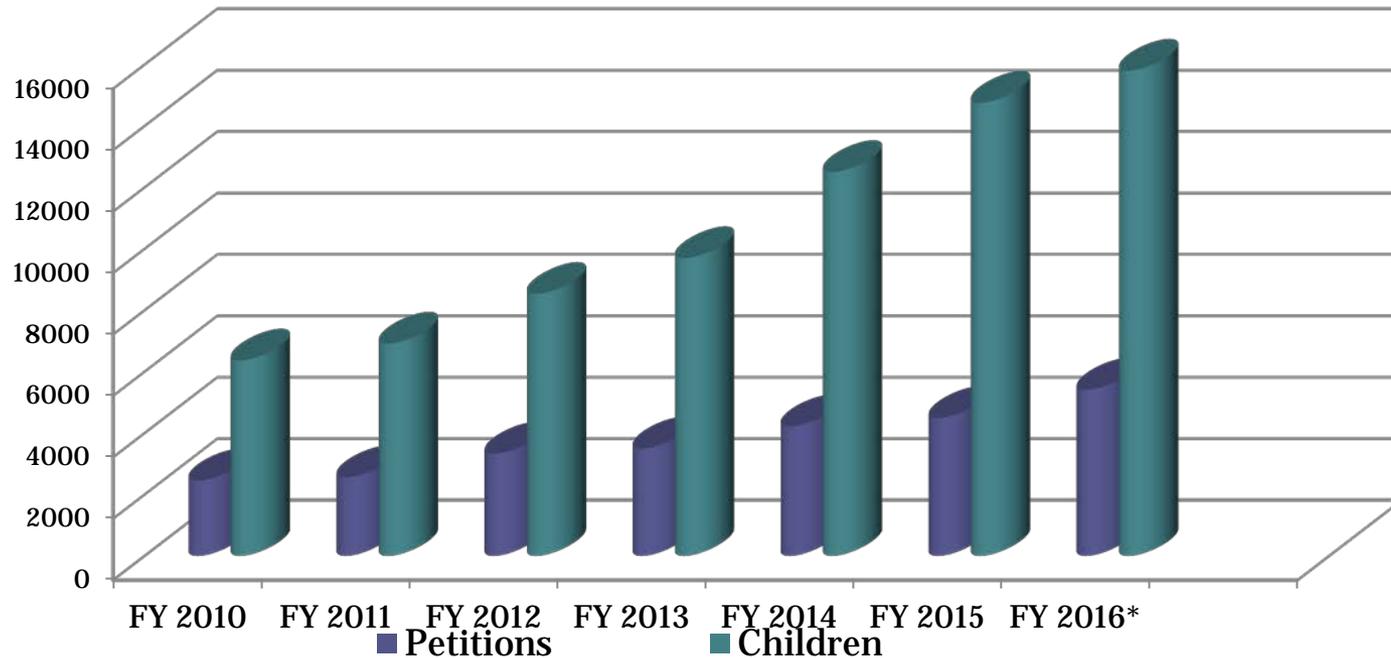
Number of Child Entries, Exits, and In Care

More children entered than exited in each year since at least 2010.



Data Source: Removals & Returns Dashboard, 6.4.16. Data from Apr 16 – Jun 16 quarter is through May 2016 and is preliminary.

Maricopa County Dependency Petition Filings



- Since FY10 there has been an 83% increase in dependency petition filings and a 106% increase in children entering the dependency court system.
- Since FY10 there has been a 131% increase in children under the court's jurisdiction through dependency proceedings.
- As of March 31, 2016, there are 13,185 children represented in 7,855 active dependency petitions in Maricopa County.

Why Should We Care?



Poor Outcomes for Foster Children

- At elementary and secondary school levels, twice as many children in care repeated a grade, changed schools during the year, or enrolled in special education programs compared to the general population (Avery, 2001, Curley & Halpern, 2001).
- Complex educational histories mean that youth in foster care graduate from high school at a rate of 10 to 20% less when compared to youth in the general population (Courtney et al, 2009). Only half earn a high school diploma before emancipating (Vacca, 2008).
- Youth from care have higher rates of unemployment or employment that is insufficient to meet their needs (Dworsky, 2005); US DHHS, 2012).
- Higher educational and employment service needs increase their risk of homelessness. In a recent three-state study (CA, TX, CO) on the needs of 601 homeless youth, over one-third reported a history of foster care involvement (Bender, Yang, Ferguson, & Thompson, 2015). As many as two-thirds of youth experience homelessness within the first 6 months of aging out of care (Dworsky & Courtney, 2009). Of those who experience homelessness, about 20% will become chronically homeless (Fowler, Toro, & Miles, 2009).

Poor Outcomes for Foster Children

- Youth in care have increased risk of experiencing physical and mental health issues (Courtney et al, 2007). Approximately 12% report a health condition or disability that significantly impacts their daily life (Zlotnick, Tam & Soman, 2012).
- Higher rates of mental health diagnoses as well as illicit substance use, abuse are found in youth emancipated from care (Stott, 2012).
- Higher rates of involvement in the criminal justice system than children in the general population (Courtney et al., 2011).
- About one in four adults ages 20 – 33 years who were previously in foster care have been observed to meet the criteria for PTSD (Pecora et al., 2005).
- It is estimated that 90% of youth who have been in out of home care have been exposed to traumatic events (Salazar, Keller, Gowen, & Courtney, 2013). Youth entering the foster care system are at high risk of adverse experiences, leaving them vulnerable to negative emotional and psychological outcomes (Bruskas & Tessin, 2013).

It can feel overwhelming!



Safe Reduction Initiative Background

- Launched in October 2014
- Sponsored by Casey Family Programs and co-led by DCS Director Greg McKay and Maricopa County Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Colleen McNally
- Designed to support the Department of Child Safety's new strategic plan and Juvenile Court's priority issues.
- Multi-system stakeholder group, which includes: juvenile court, child welfare, parents, advocates, community providers, attorneys, behavioral health, human services, education, probation, corrections and legislative representation.

SRWG Partnerships



JUDICIAL BRANCH OF ARIZONA
COUNTY OF MARICOPA



Safe Reduction Initiative Background

Vision:

A collaborative community that supports safe and enduring family environments for all children and their caretakers.

Goals:

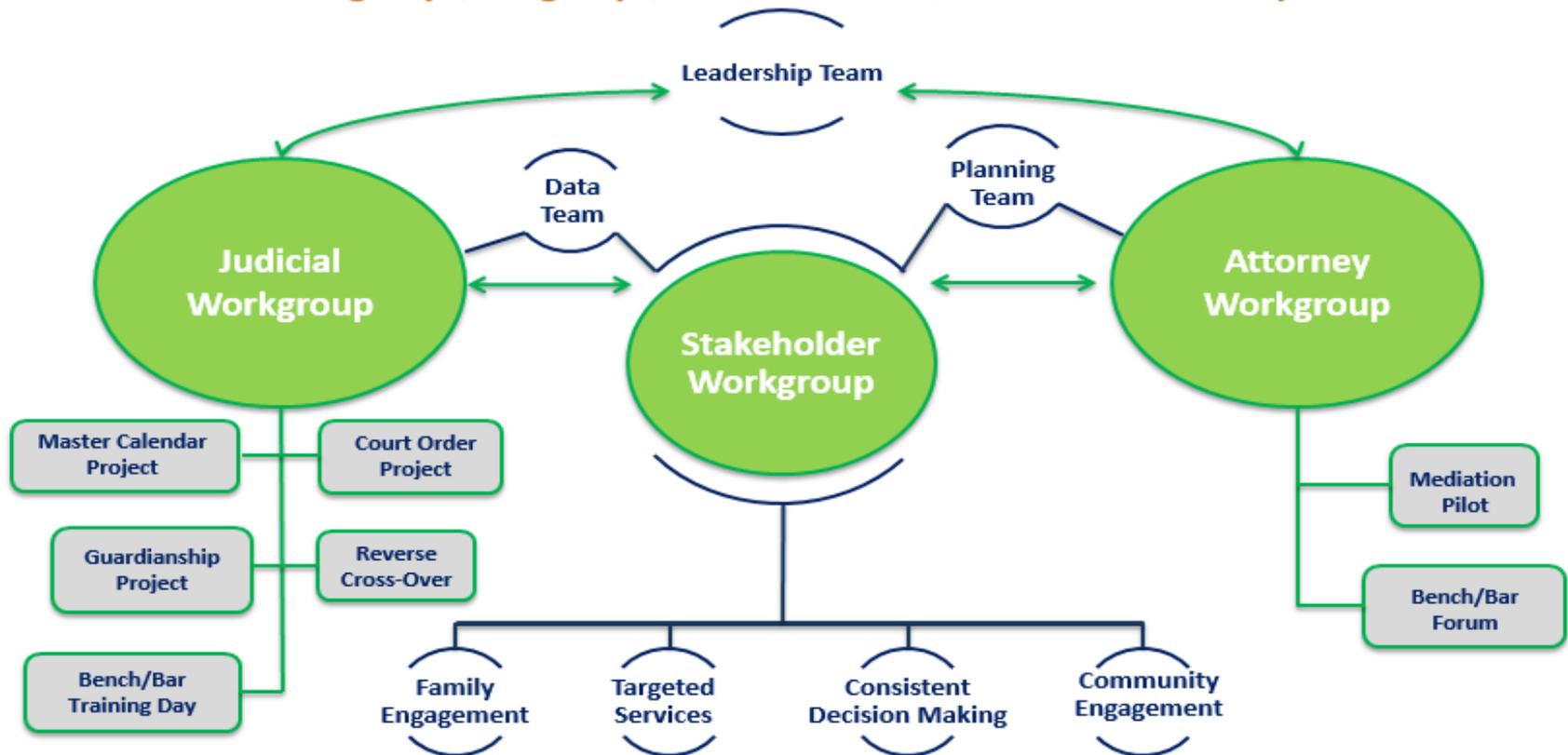
- Safely reduce the number of children and youth in out of home care in Maricopa County.
- Increase timely permanency for children and youth in out of home care in Maricopa County.

Safe Reduction Initiative Infrastructure

Safe Reduction: Building the Foundation

Maricopa County

workgroups, subgroups, infrastructure, communication loops



Judicial and Attorney Workgroups

- Redesign Mediation process to increase impact and ability to settle cases out of court
- Bench bar forums to improve communication between judges, attorneys, DCS and other stakeholders
- Walkaway court orders
- Focused attention on reverse Crossover youth
- Consideration of new guardianship proceeding which allows for court supervision outside of dependency action
- Earlier notification for parents of preliminary protective and initial dependency hearings
- Review of emergency shelter hearings to increase accountability for placing children in family like settings

Family Engagement Subgroup

Purpose: Improve relationship based engagement with children and families to safely reduce the number of children in care.

- Redefining visitation as Parenting Time, including training on strengths-based parenting time strategies
- Peer parenting support

Targeted Services Subgroup

Purpose: All families, children, and caregivers involved with DCS will receive an early assessment with specific family centered recommendations and guidelines for coordination of services for each individual, beginning at intake and continuing throughout DCS involvement.

- Improving early family-centered assessment leading to individualized coordinated service planning
- Developing process for presenting, updating and accessing service information
- Attention to reducing placement disruptions

Consistent Decision Making Subgroup

Purpose: Review policies and tools used to guide decision making around removal, placement, assessment, and parent support to ensure alignment with DCS' strategic plan and objectives

- Policy, procedure and training review to align with DCS strategic plan and best practices
- Improving case plan creation and assessment

Community Engagement Subgroup

Purpose: Establish focused attention in several high child removal areas that result in disproportionate numbers of children from those communities coming into care. Partner with key stakeholders to identify solutions to prevent removals.

- Engage local community leaders in high removal areas to partner in prevention and community-based interventions
- Build coalitions of support for vulnerable children and families

Power of a Good Idea

- **Postcard Exercise**

Three Takeaways

Children of all ages do best when cared for in safe, loving permanent family homes.

Investing in struggling families to safely care for their children results in millions of dollars and thousands of lives saved.

Caring community and connected system partners will positively impact well-being of children and families.

Questions?

Maricopa County Safe Reduction Initiative

<https://sites.google.com/site/maricopacountysafereduction/home>

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