

SOCIAL SERVICES TRENDS

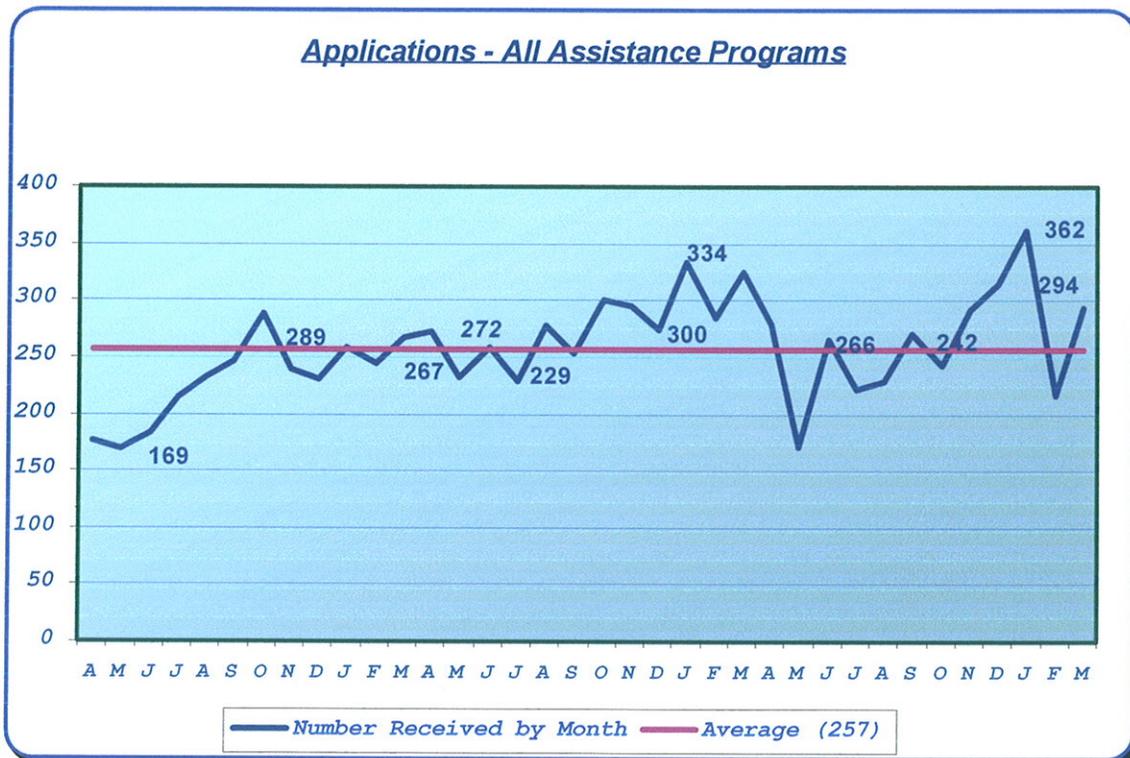
Quarter Ending: March 31, 2011

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 March 31, 2011. 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 County web site at www.countyofplumas.com.

I. WELFARE TO WORK & PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DIVISION

A. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

Applications for assistance (CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal) continue to be received in unprecedented numbers. For thirty consecutive months, the application count has exceeded 200 per month with the exception of last May where applications were closed for five days while computer conversion occurred. In January 1997 the Department received 350 applications for assistance - the last time numbers approached or exceeded 350. The 362 received in January of 2011 represents an historic high.



CONTINUING CASES

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

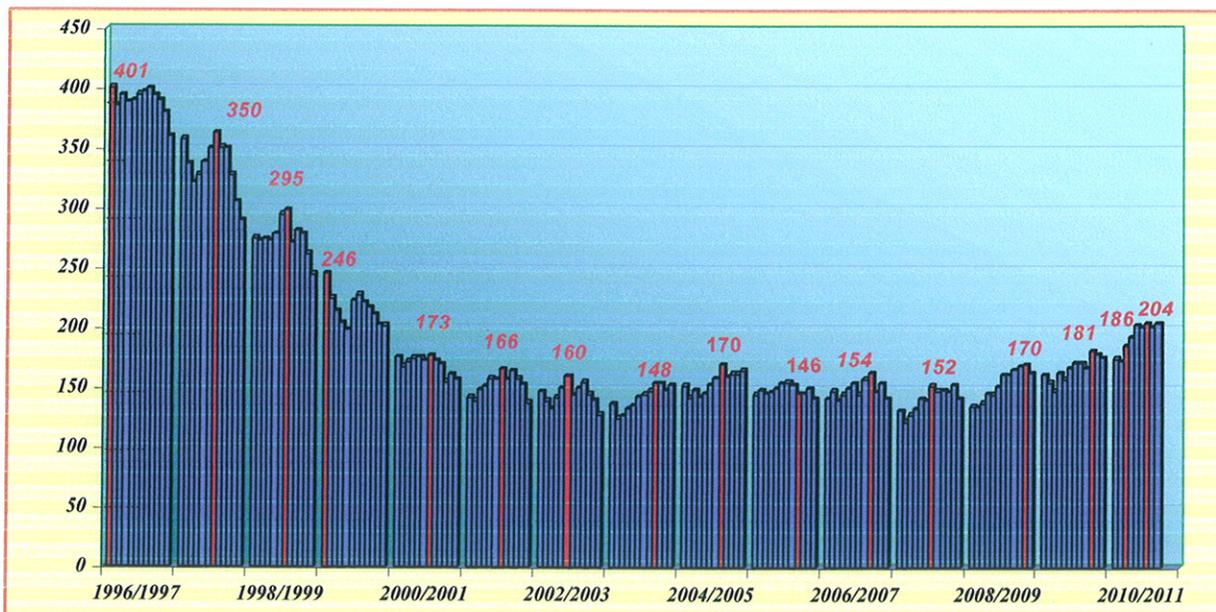
Considering the historic high volume of applications that have been received by the Department the growth in CalWORKs cash assistance cases has been modest when compared to the growth in the Foodstamp (CalFresh) and Medi-Cal programs. None the less, the CalWORKs average case count is a little over 26% above the average just two years ago reflecting the continuing impacts of the recessionary economy on Plumas County families.

A family applying for CalWORKs cash assistance must prove that they are residents of Plumas County. In cases where residency may be in doubt, the Department operates an early fraud detection program where our Welfare Fraud Investigator may make a home visit prior to assistance being granted.

Average Monthly Caseload

2008/2009	153
2009/2010	166
2010/2011	193

AFDC/CalWORKs Open Cases at End of Month



(2). Food Stamp Assistance

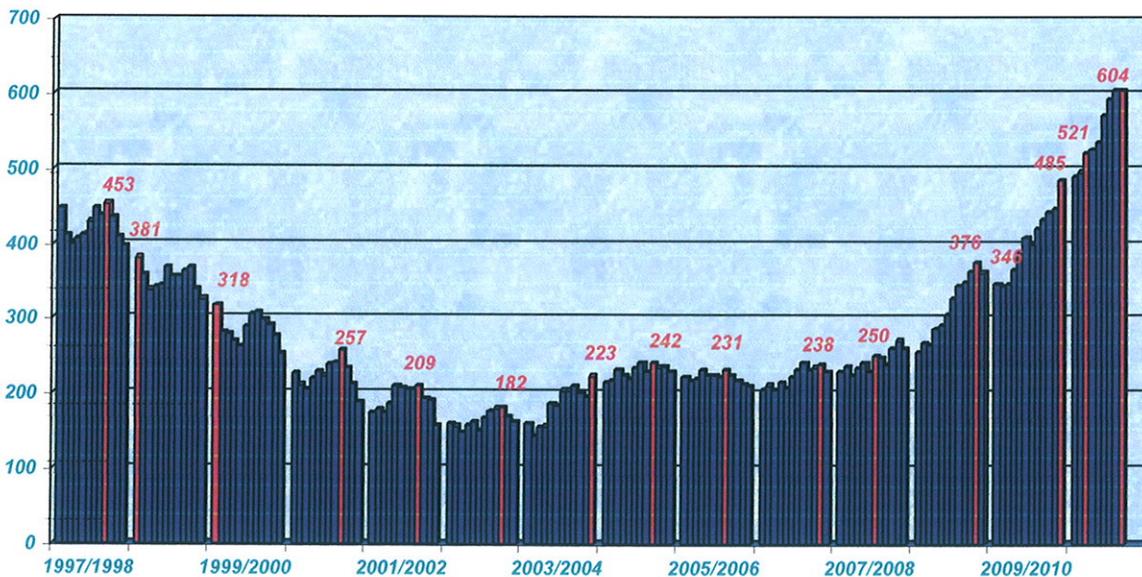
A. Case Count

The depth of the economic recession and the slowness of recovery continue to be reflected in CalFresh (Foodstamp) case counts that are historically unprecedented. While nationally the economy is showing slow signs of recovery, at the local level jobs that were lost in the recession are not returning as quickly. Some may not ever return. The March case count of 604 is likely to continue to grow for the near term at least until summer tourism increases employment opportunities. As is discussed in the prior CaWORKs section, applicants for Foodstamps must be residents of Plumas County in order to receive assistance.

Average Monthly Caseload

2008/2009	316
2009/2010	402
2010/2011	549

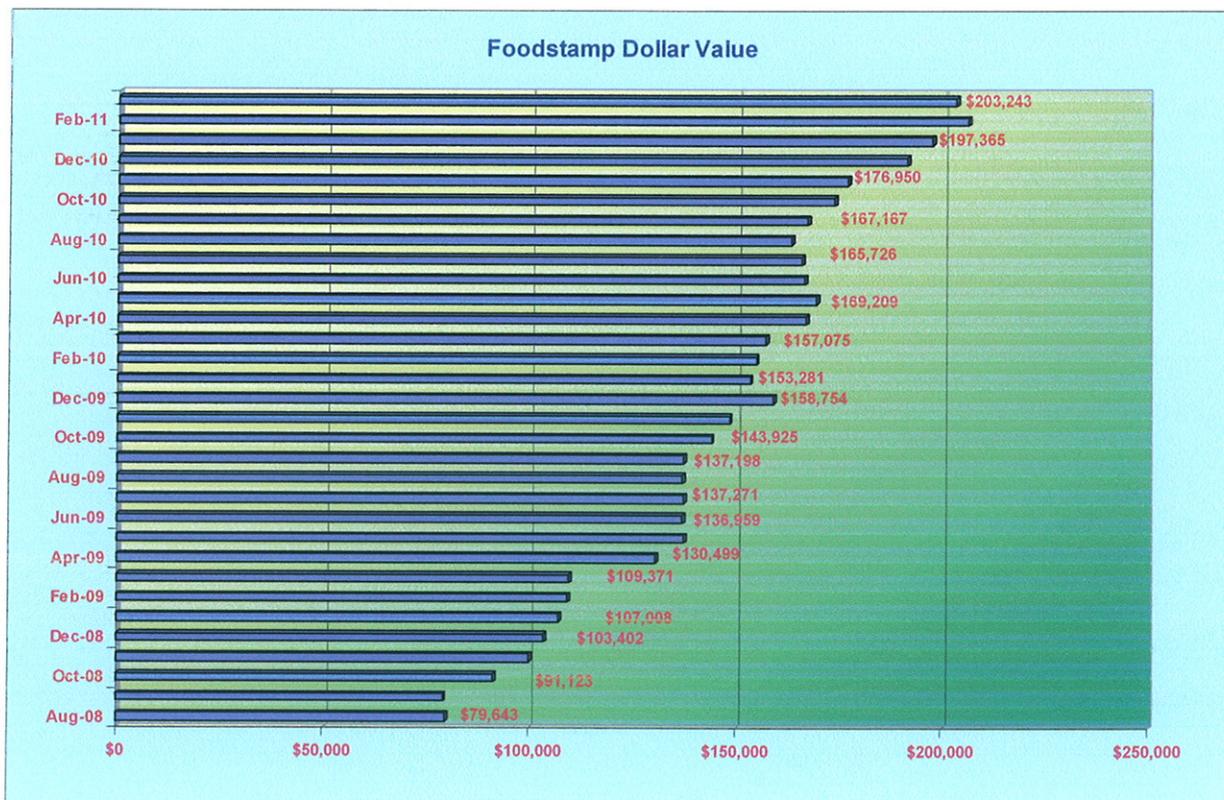
Food Stamp Open Cases at End of Month



B. Foodstamp Dollar Value

On average, an eligible household receives about \$320 in CalFresh (Foodstamp) benefits per month. These benefits are intended to supplement food purchasing power. In just over a two and a half year period the value of CalFresh assistance has more than doubled. As with the case count the value of benefits issued is being driven by the recessionary economy. Many of the people we see have had longer term connections with the labor force.

As has been reported elsewhere by the Department, about 67% of the total Foodstamp benefits issued are spent at local grocery outlets.



(3). Medi-Cal.

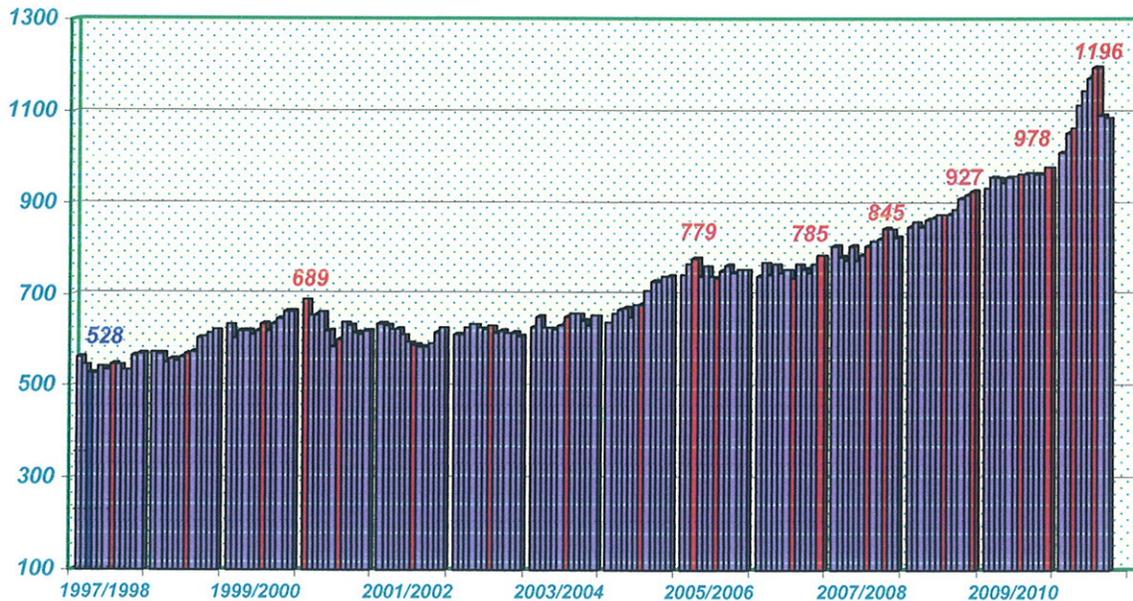
Poor economic conditions, the lack of employer provided insurance and increased focus on health care and health insurance reform at the federal level have been factors in a pattern of growth in this program for the past three and a half years. The steady upward climb to 1196 cases in January dropped some during the final two months of the quarter. The Department believes that at some point a plateau has to be reached with this particular case count. It remains to be seen whether the downward trend during February and March indicates that the plateau has been reached or whether it represents a blip on a continuing upward trend.

As with other assistance programs an applicant must be a resident of Plumas County and a resident of California to qualify for Medi-Cal.

Average Monthly Caseload

2008/2009	879
2009/2010	958
2010/2011	1104

Medi-Cal Open Cases at End of Month



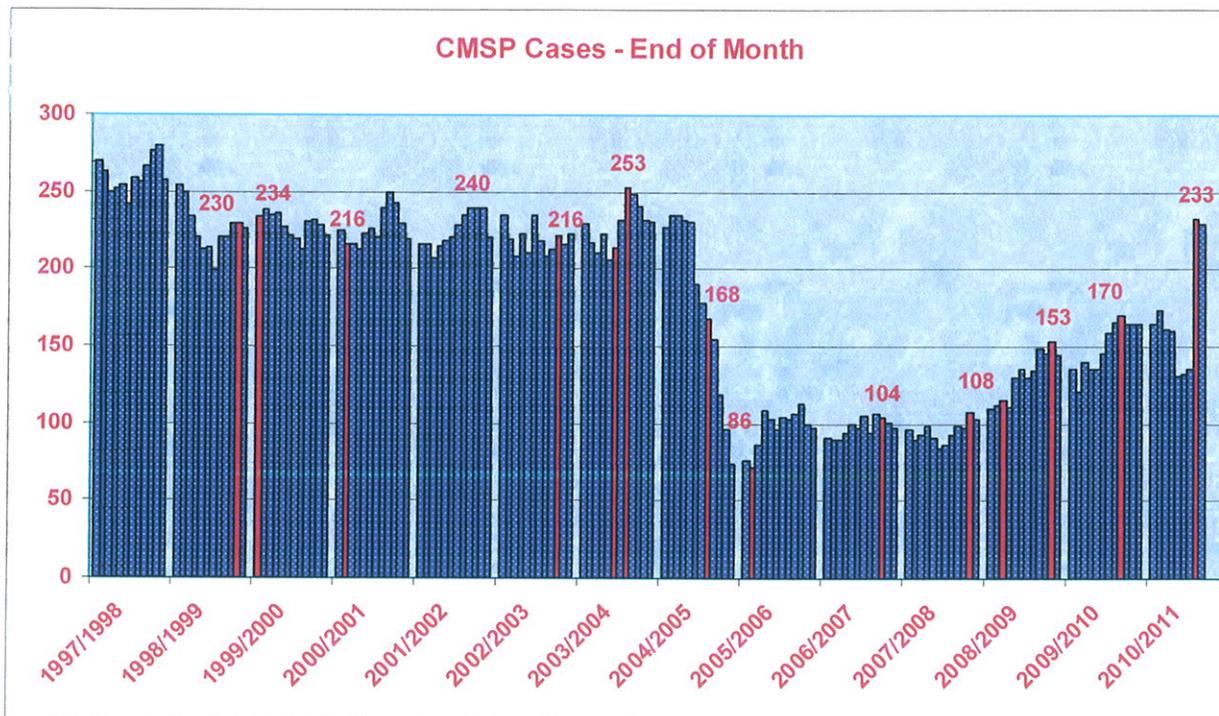
(4). County Medical Services Program (CMSP).

The County Medical Services Program (CMSP) meets the mandate to provide care for medically indigent persons who are the County's responsibility under Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. An applicant must be a resident of Plumas County to receive CMSP benefits.

As has been reported previously in Trends the CMSP case count will rise proportionately with an increase in Foodstamp cases because many Foodstamp recipients are eligible for CMSP and have a medical need at the time of their application.

Average Monthly Caseload

2008/2009	95
2009/2010	131
2010/2011	169

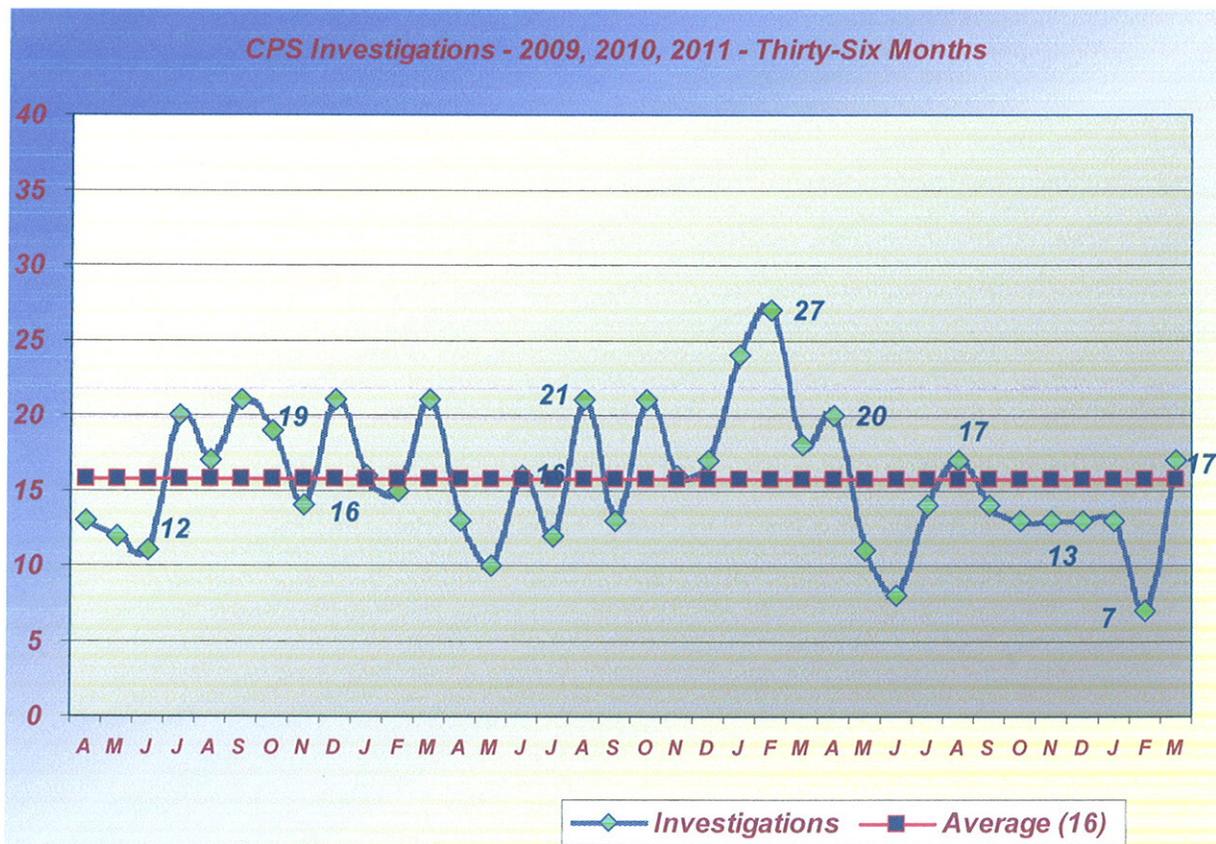


II. SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

A. Child Welfare Services

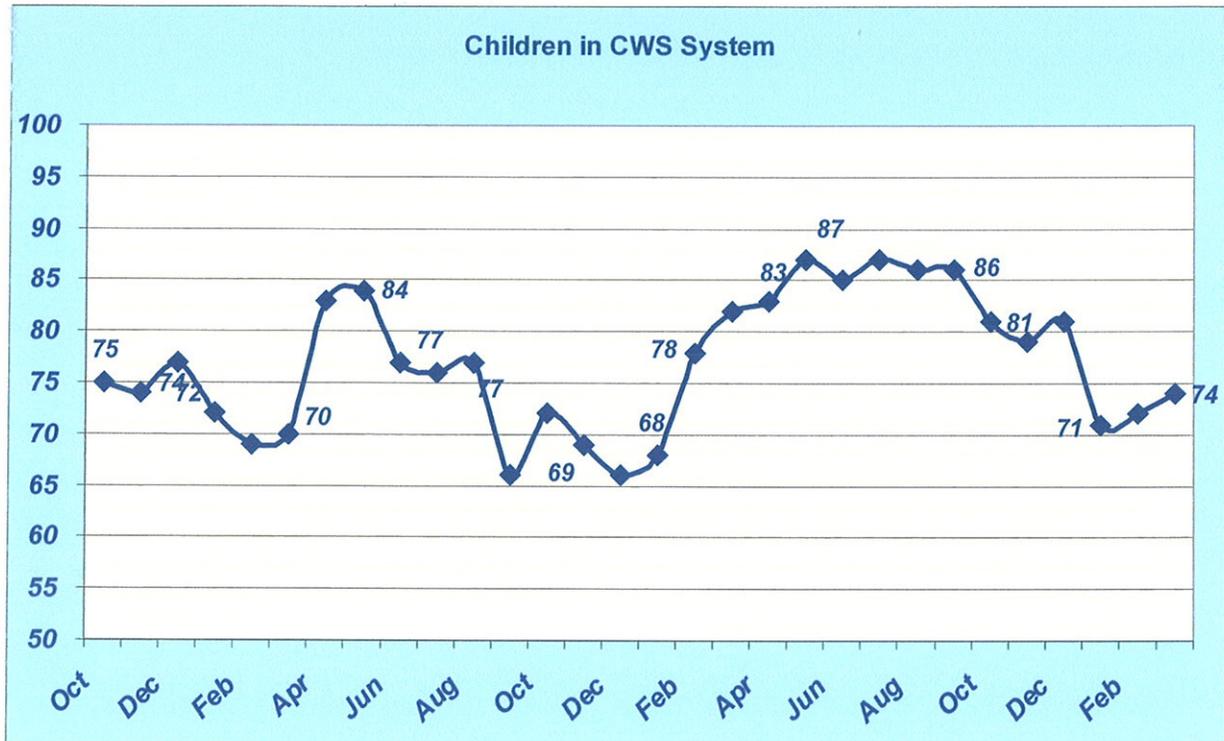
The Emergency Response component of Child Protective Services averages in the range of about 16 requests per month. During the most recent six month period, investigations have been running below the average.

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 abuse. We have also had an unusual number of families with older children (children over the age of 10) referred for these reasons.



B. Children in the Child Welfare Services System

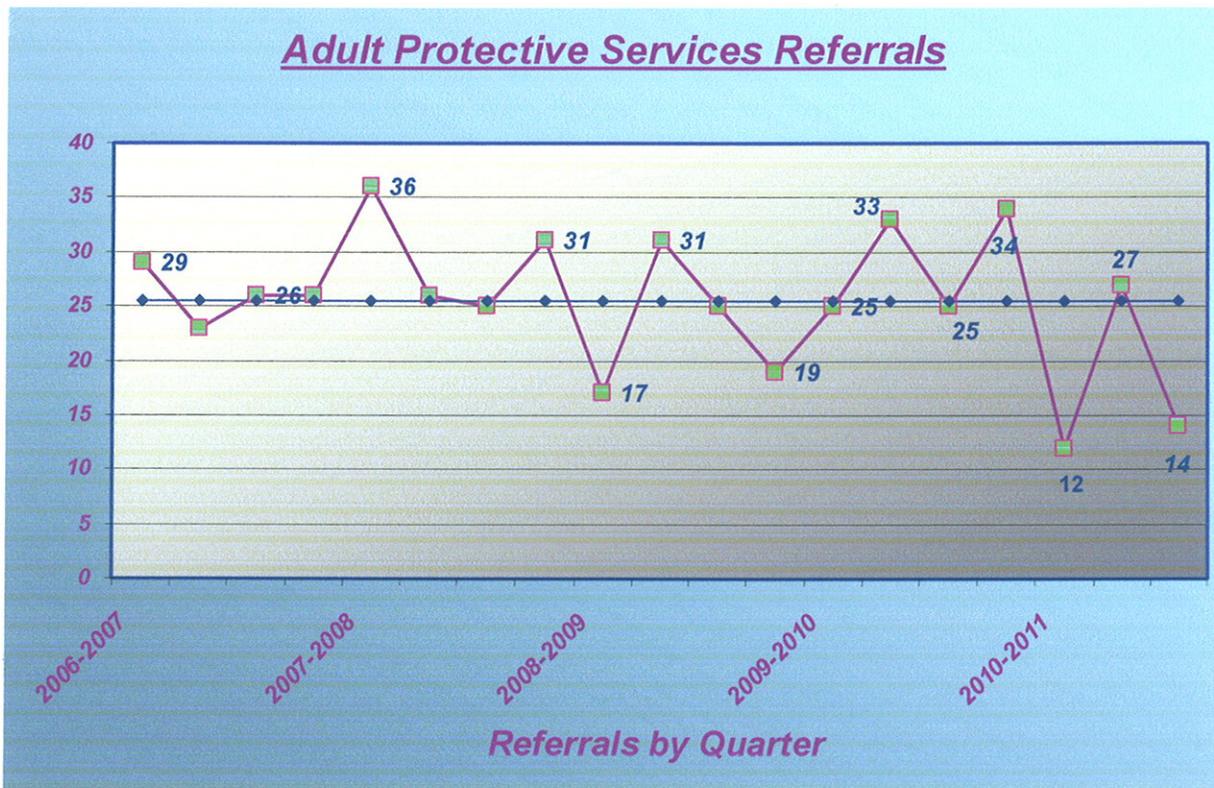
The goal of the Child Welfare System is first and foremost to secure a safe environment for children so that they are able to remain in or be quickly returned to their own home. While the thirty-six month trend for children who are in our system has projected downward, a troubling element of the case count is growth in the number of children who are in the Permanent Placement component of the system (meaning that they are not going to return home).



C. Adult Protective Services

The average number of referrals for this program tends to be in the range of about 25 referrals per quarter. While last quarter our numbers were about average in the most recent three-month period our numbers have dropped. If the typical pattern holds, we are likely to experience an increase again during the next period.

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 referrals we receive.

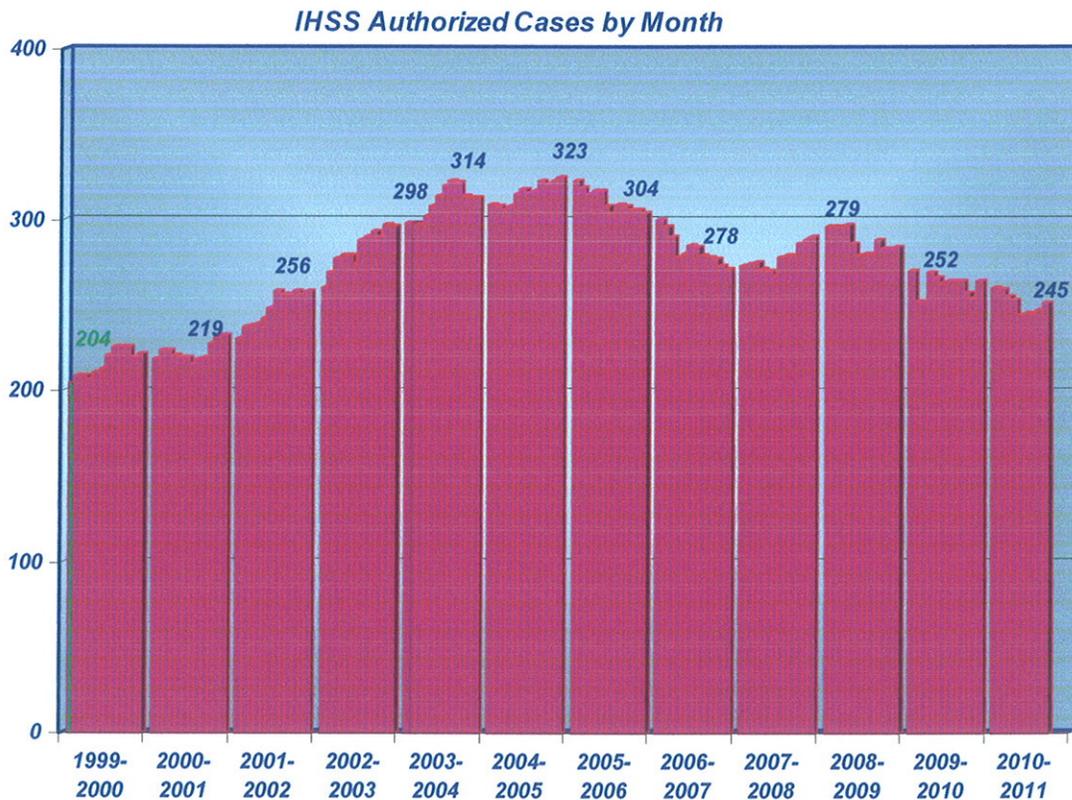


D. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS).

Prior Trends reports indicated that the downward trend to the case count has likely been the result of reductions in hours for consumers that have higher levels of function. We also reported our belief that the impact of these reductions has leveled. The case count for the past ten months has been running in the range of 245-265 cases, a reduction of about 23% from the high count of 323 in June 2005.

Average Monthly Case Count

2008/2009	287
2009/2010	262
2010/2011	251



III. PUBLIC GUARDIAN

The Public Guardian currently provides guardianship and conservator services to a total of 8 LPS and Probate conservatees. The Public Guardian also serves as representative payee for 6 SSI recipients. Two new conservatorship referrals have been received for evaluation or potential conservatorship.