



Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Interim Director
Bobby Cagle

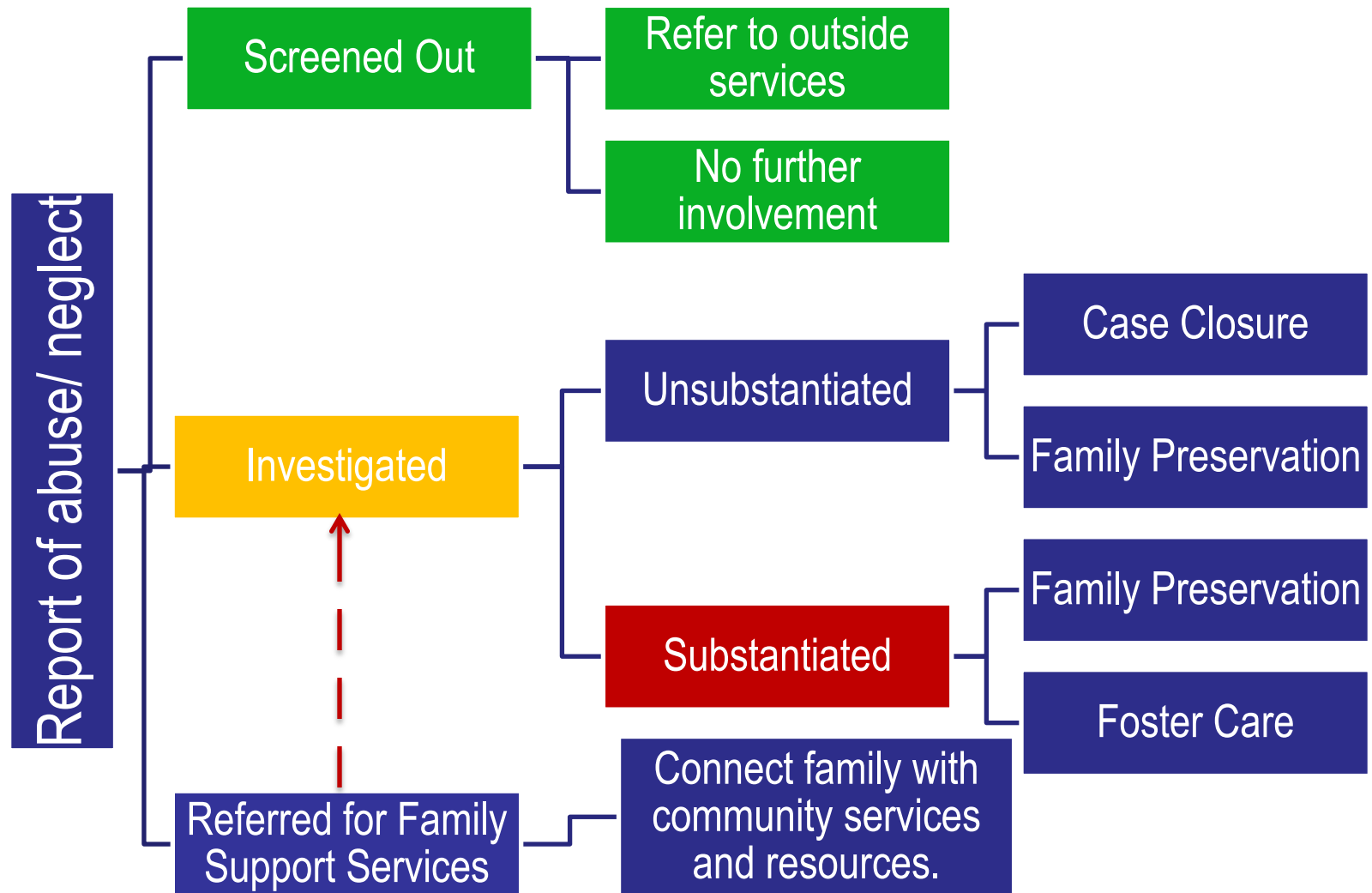
Overview: Reports of Abuse and Neglect



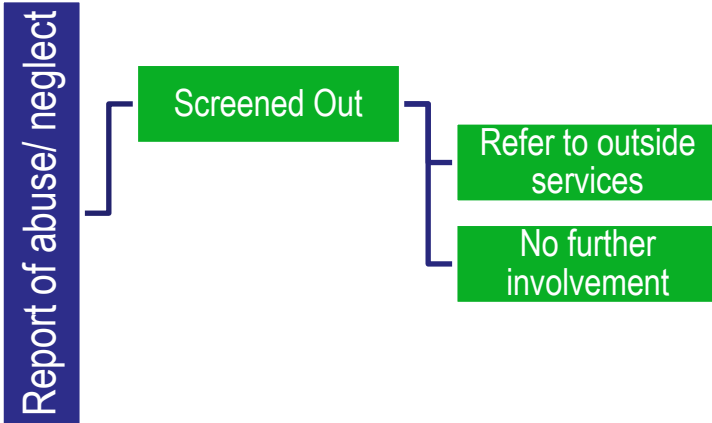
- 1-855- GA CHILD
- Email/Fax
- In person



Overview: Reports of Abuse and Neglect



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Screen out: Report does not include enough information to establish that maltreatment occurred or issues do not meet statutory requirements for DFCS involvement.

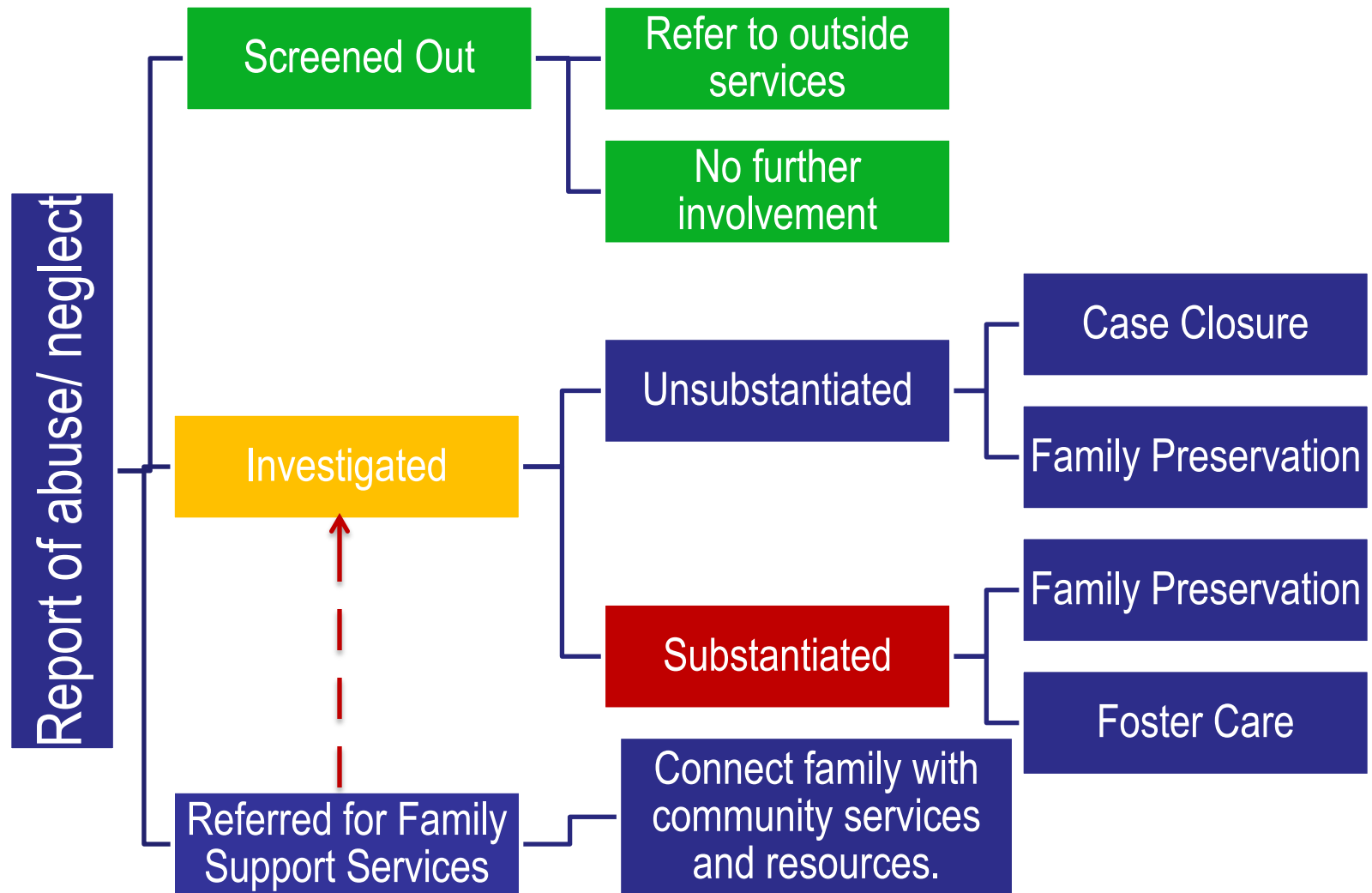
Screen out and refer: Report does not meet Georgia statute and DFCS policy requirements concerning child abuse and/or neglect, but indicates the family may have unmet needs that are not related to safety. Family is referred to community resources that could provide needed support.

Third-level review process provides extra layers of attention on screened-out reports.

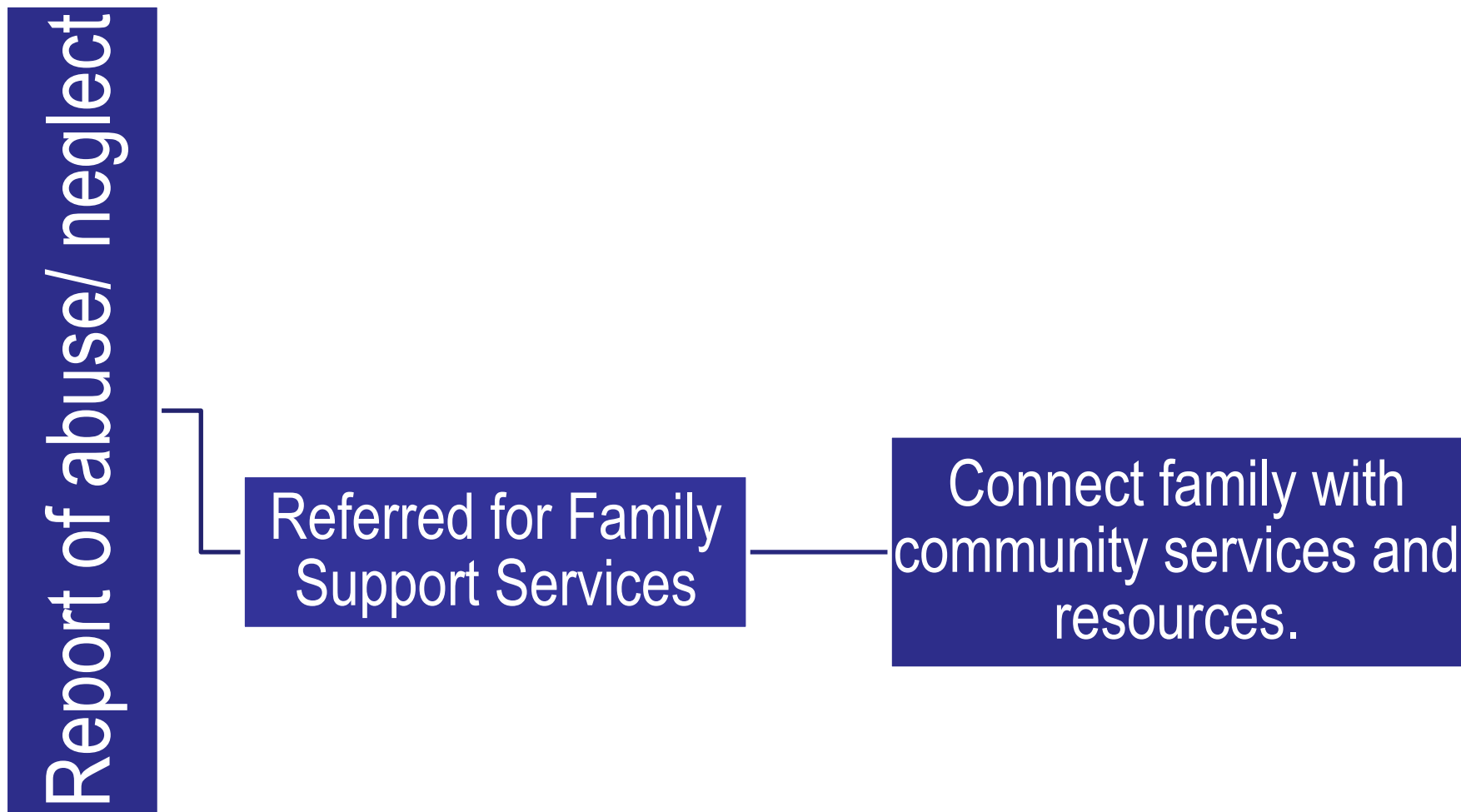
- With centralized intake, each “screen out” decision is reviewed by a supervisor and an administrator to ensure reports receive the appropriate amount of DFCS attention.



Overview: Reports of Abuse and Neglect



Overview: Reports of Abuse and Neglect



Overview: DFCS involvement

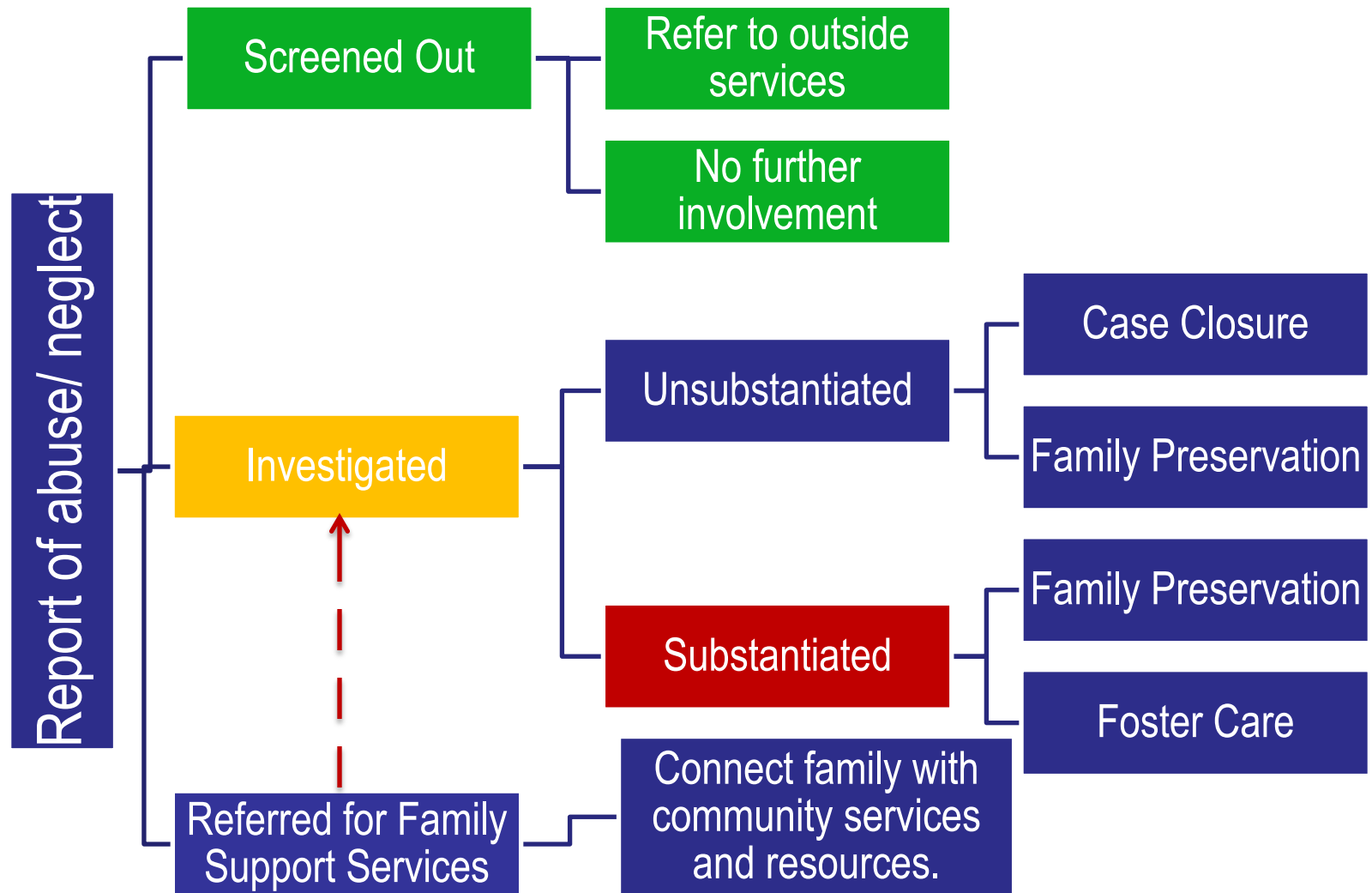
Family Support Services: There are allegations of child abuse and/or neglect, but there is no indication of an imminent or impending risk of harm.

Referred to caseworker for response **within 5 days.**

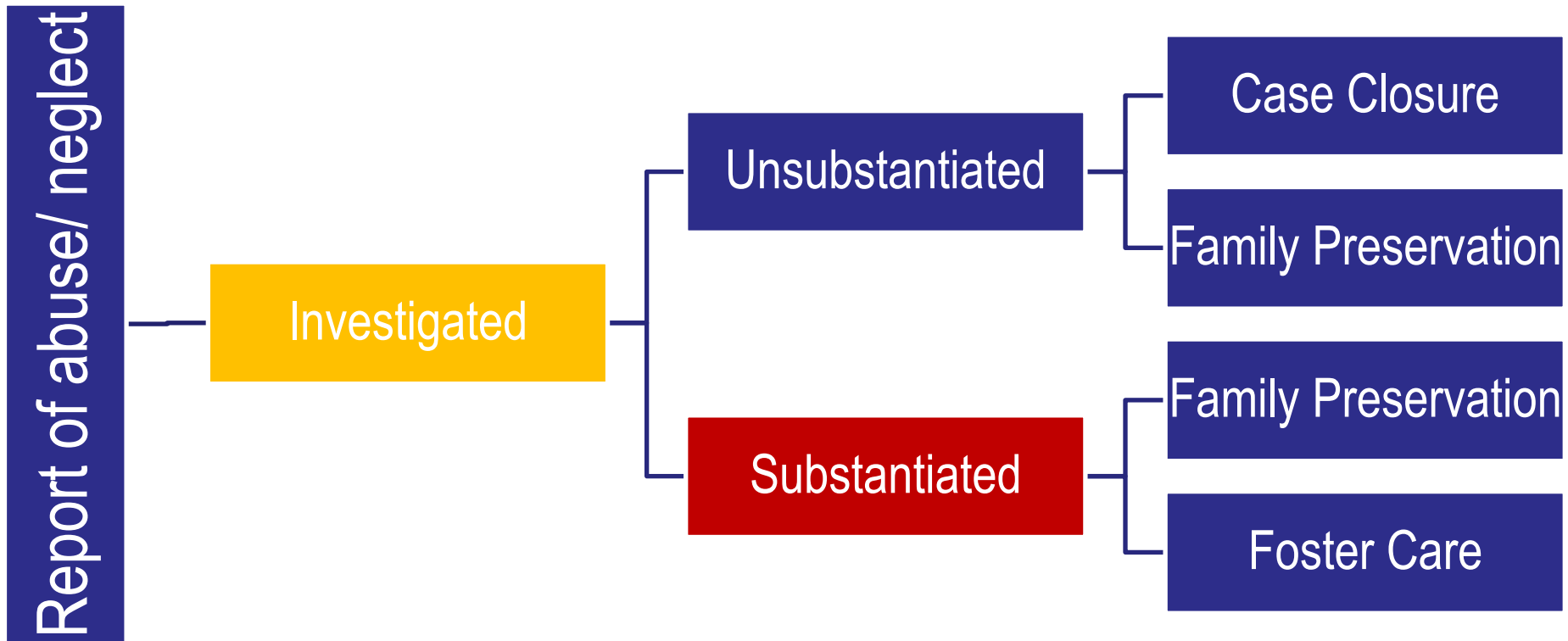
- Case manager gathers information to determine how the family functions. This includes: the circumstances of the maltreatment, the daily functioning of the caregiver and the child, parenting practices and discipline practices.
- Information allows the case manager to determine the existence of present or impending danger.
- Assessment could result in:
 - Abuse/neglect investigation.
 - Connect family with community resources and services to address any identified factors and prevent future safety threats. Depending on the circumstances, DFCS may not need to remain involved during provision of services.



Overview: Reports of Abuse and Neglect



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Overview: DFCS involvement

Investigation: information provided in the report established the potential of child maltreatment and child appears to be **unsafe** in current situation.

- Referred to caseworker for response **immediately to within 24 hours.**
 - Caseworker reviews history, interviews and examines the child (outside of the presence of parents, interviews parents, and collateral sources to assess family functioning.
- Determines whether maltreatment exists by evaluating:
 - the extent of the maltreatment
 - the nature of the maltreatment
 - functioning of child and parents
 - parenting abilities and discipline practices
- Determines if safety threat exists.
- Develops safety plan to address identified threats in home or out of home.



Overview: DFCS involvement

Investigation Findings

Address the reported maltreatment

- Unsubstantiated: a preponderance of evidence gathered does not support allegations of maltreatment.
- Substantiated: a preponderance of the evidence gathered demonstrates that child(ren) have been maltreated and are potentially in danger.

Address current situation

- Safe: no identified safety threat exists; if previous threats existed, they were mitigated or eliminated.
- Unsafe: safety threats exist that has not or cannot be mitigated or eliminated.



Overview: DFCS involvement

Cases Resulting from Investigations

- Family Preservation:

If children can remain in the home, DFCS develops a safety plan to address identified concerns. Goal of the plan is to keep the family together, utilizing a wide array of services, involvement of family members, to find solutions that guarantee the safety of the children.
- Foster Care:

If the child's safety in the home cannot be assured, DFCS petitions the Court to place the child in a temporary setting that will guarantee safety. While the child is in care, the case manager works with the family to make the home safe so that the child can eventually return home, if deemed appropriate by the Court. If it is determined that the child cannot return to his or her family, DFCS works with the Court to seek a permanent option.

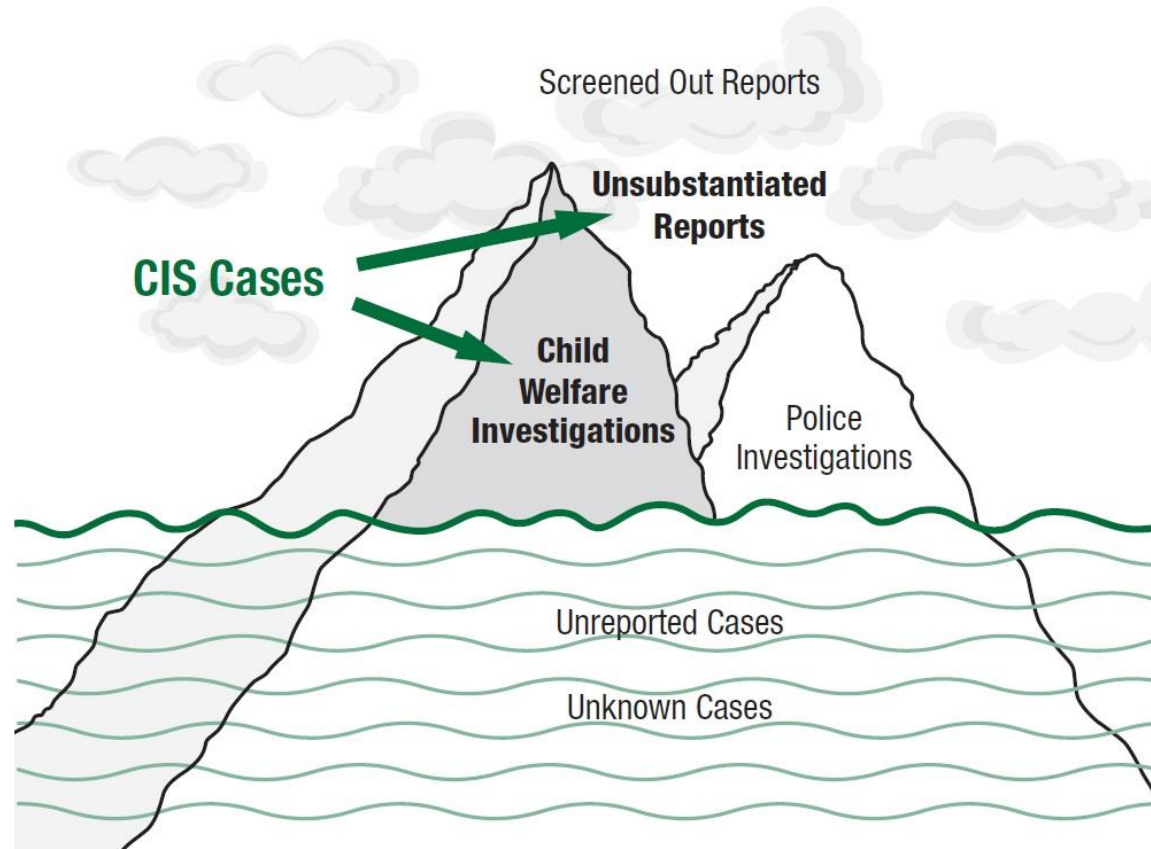


Overview: Community awareness

DFCS involvement in child abuse and neglect depends largely on reports from outside entities: law enforcement, school counselors, concerned family and community members. The community's level of awareness fluctuates based on external factors.

- **July 2012**
 - Georgia's mandated reporter law expands the number of people required to report suspicions of abuse and neglect.
- **October 2013 - present**
 - Launch of 24-hour reporting line streamlined method of making reports.
 - Intense interest in the legislature and the media in child welfare issues.

FIGURE 1-1: Scope of the CIS-2008*



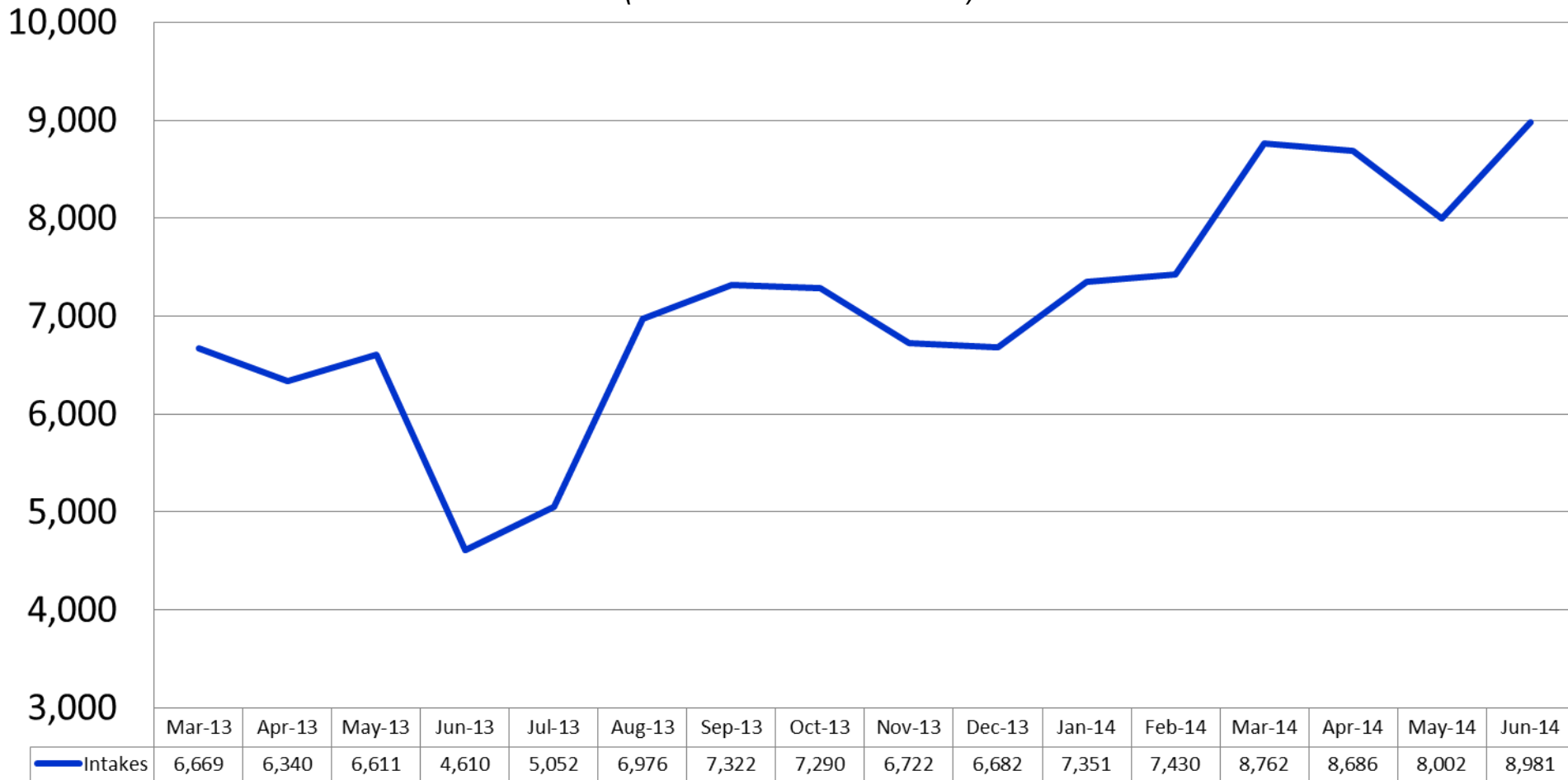
* Adapted from Trocmé, McPhee, Tam, & Hay, 1994; Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996



Source: Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2008

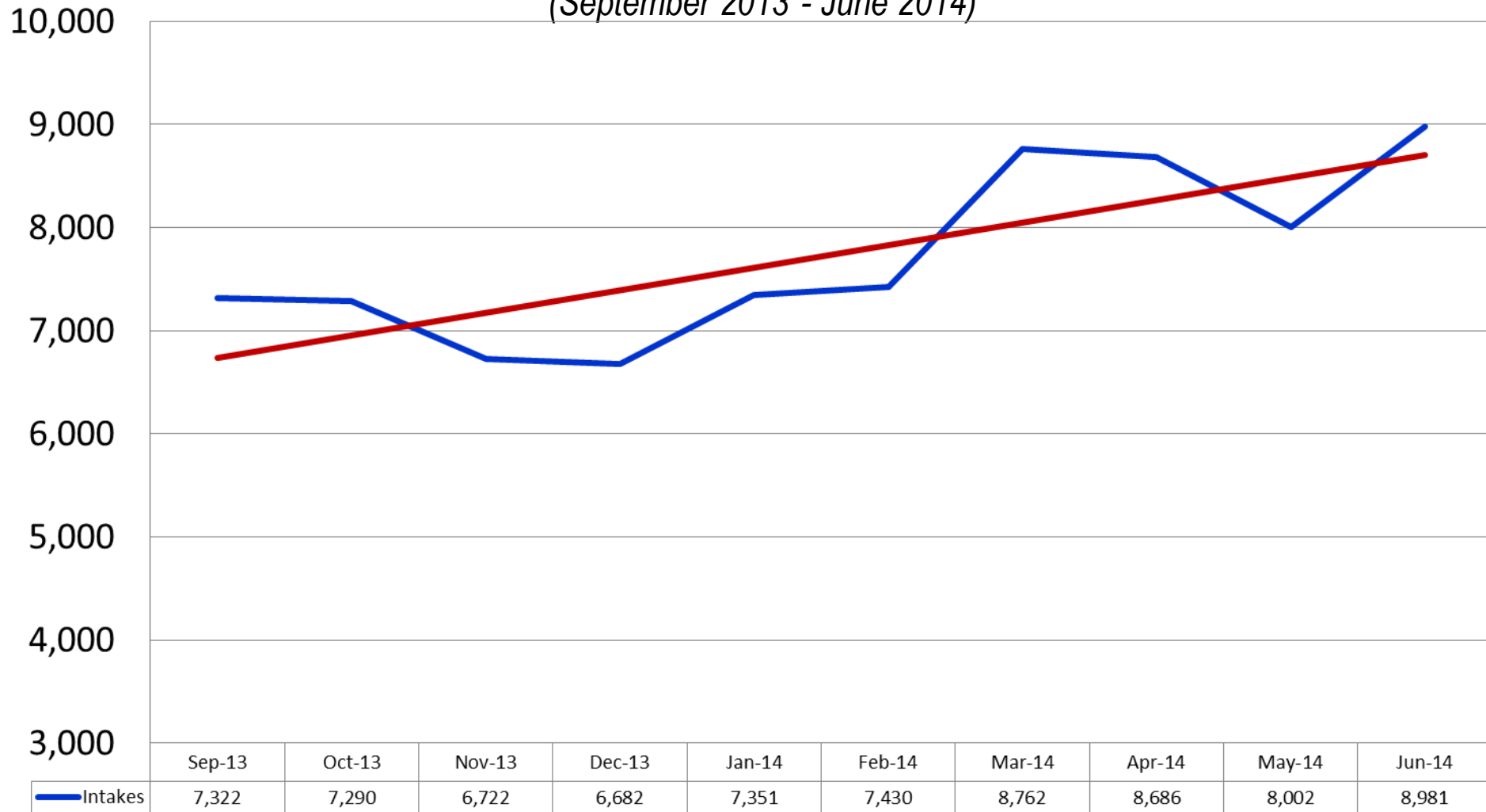
Overview: DFCS awareness

CPS Intakes Received
(March 2013-June 2014)



Overview: DFCS awareness

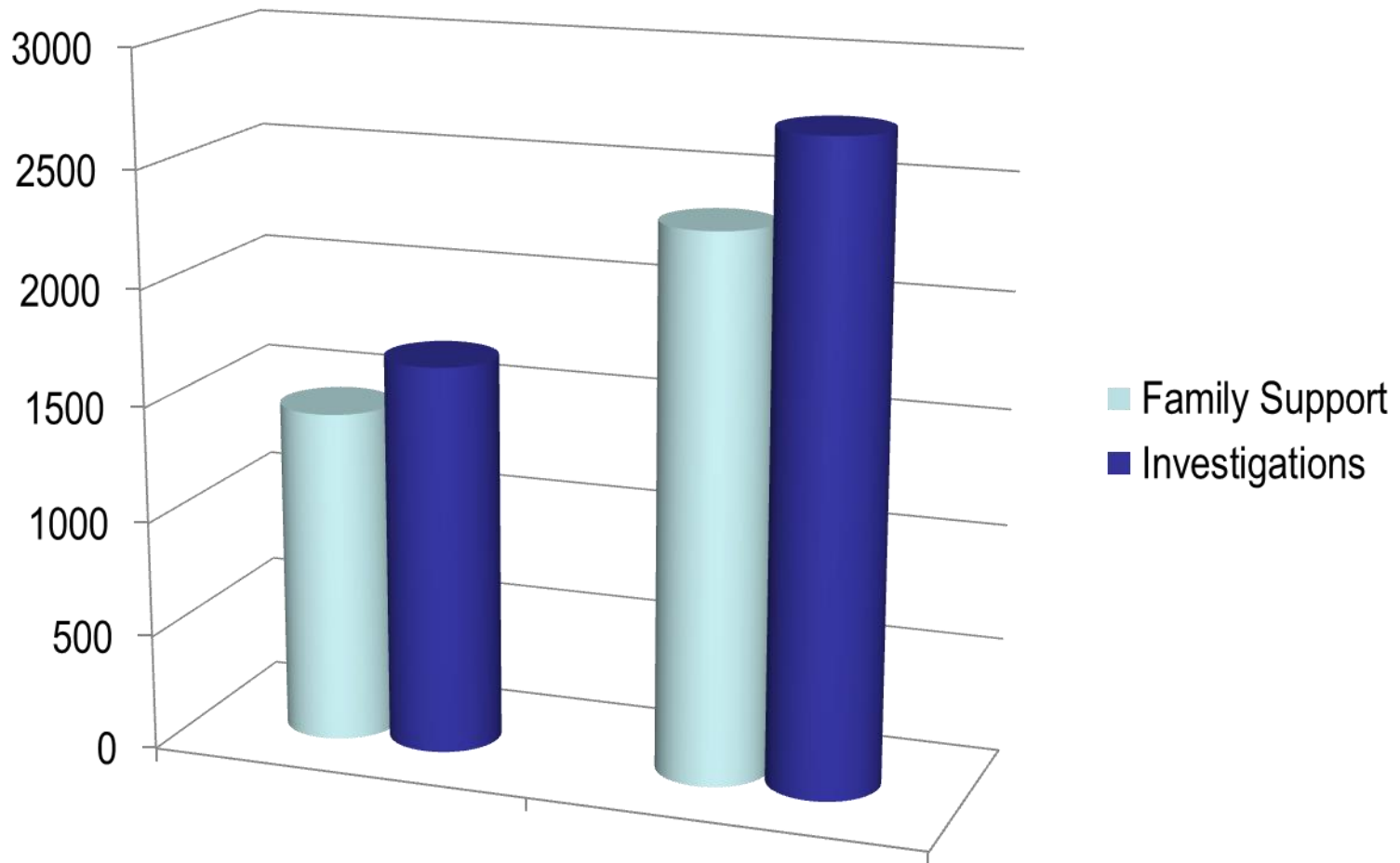
Growth in CPS Intakes with 24-hour call center
(September 2013*- June 2014)



**24/7 Centralized Intake Call Center rollout began October 2013.

Overview: Growth in opened DFCS cases

DFCS cases opened in June 2013 vs. June 2014



**Reflects 63 percent increase in cases opened.

Overview: DFCS open cases by Region – June 2014

1,738 Open cases
5.1% of statewide case total

2,108 Open cases
6.2% of statewide case total

3,486
10.2%

4,710
13.8%

4,441
13.1%

2,183
6.4%

2,081
6.1%

2,290
6.7%

1,070
3.1%

1,699
5.0%

1,170
3.4%

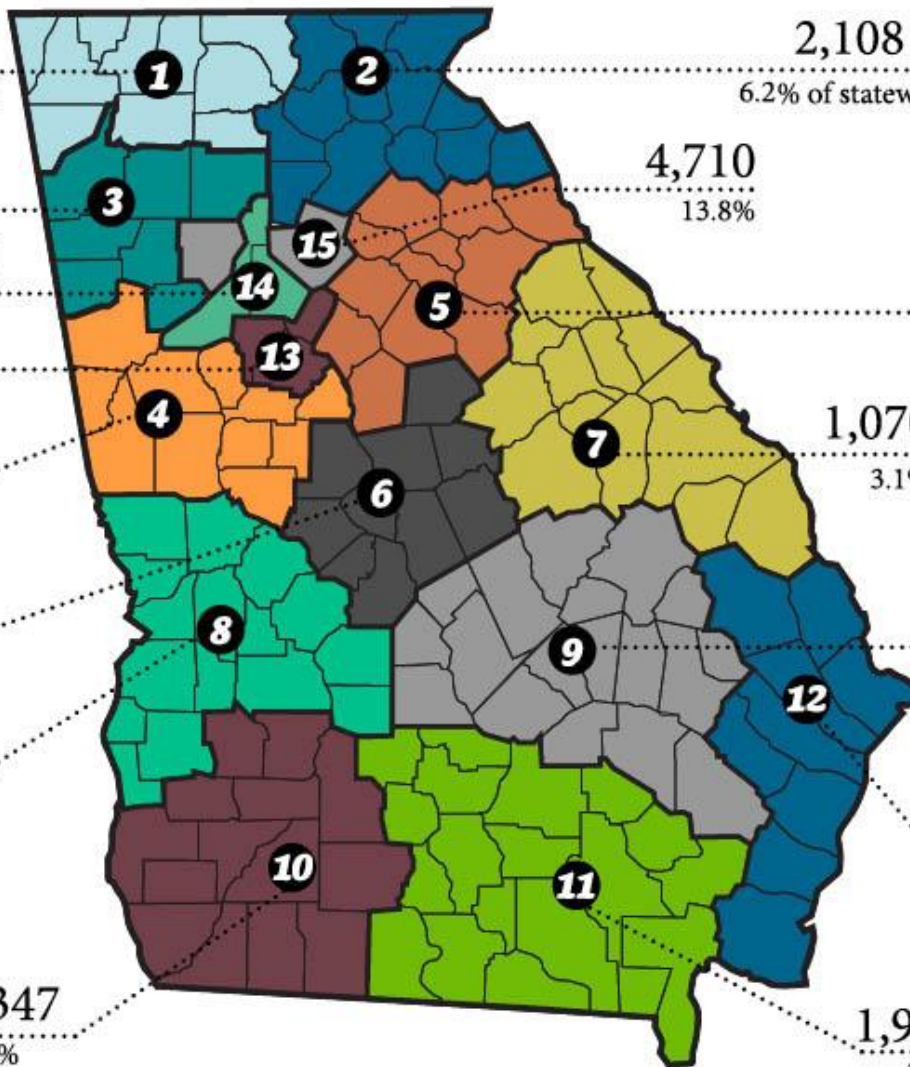
1,532
4.5%

2,271
6.7%

1,347
4.0%

1,904
5.6%

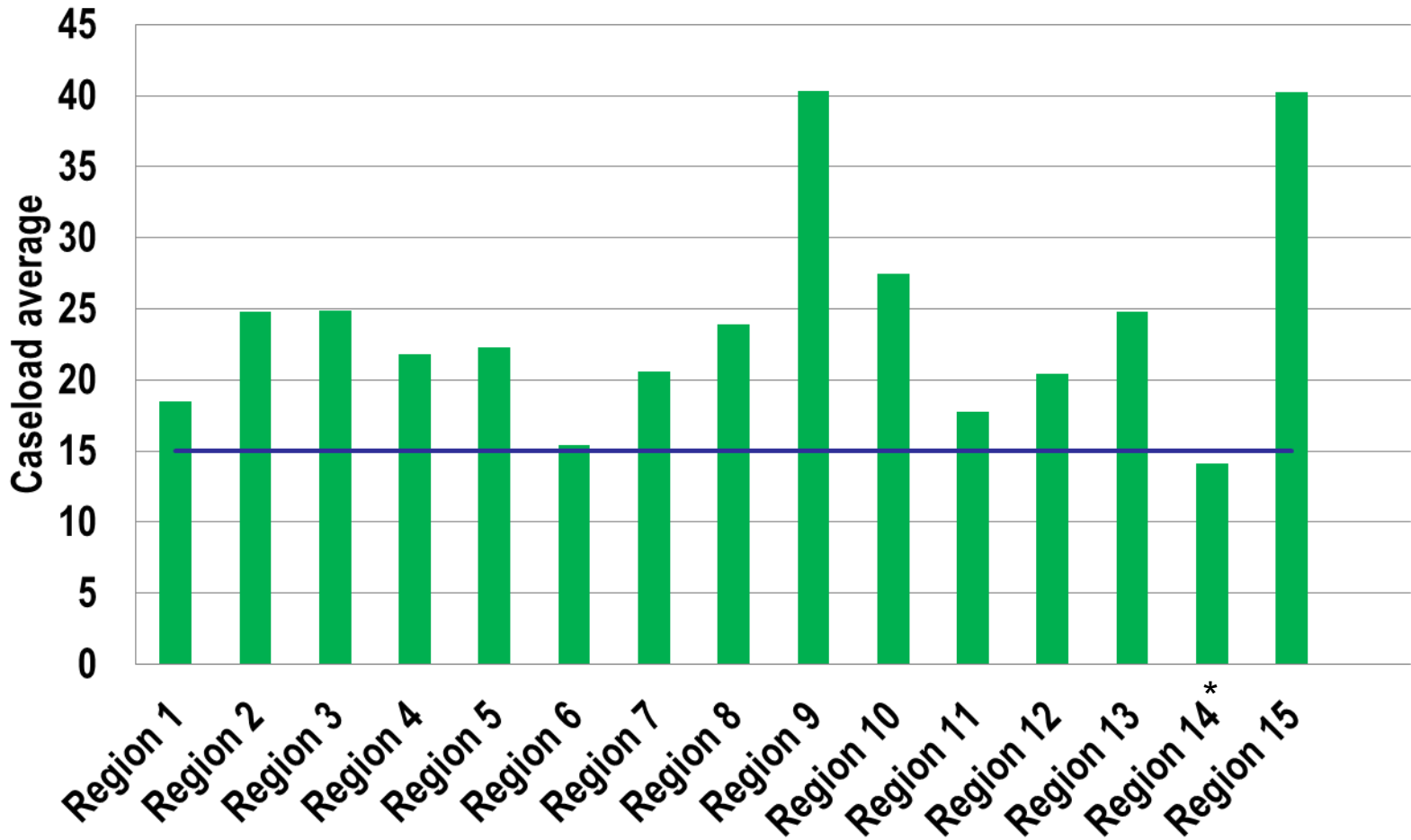
Data from June 2014



*Map depicts all open cases in each region in June 2014, including investigations, family support, family preservation and foster care.

Overview: DFCS caseload sizes

Caseload averages by Region



The average social services caseworker is involved with **21.83** Georgia families.**

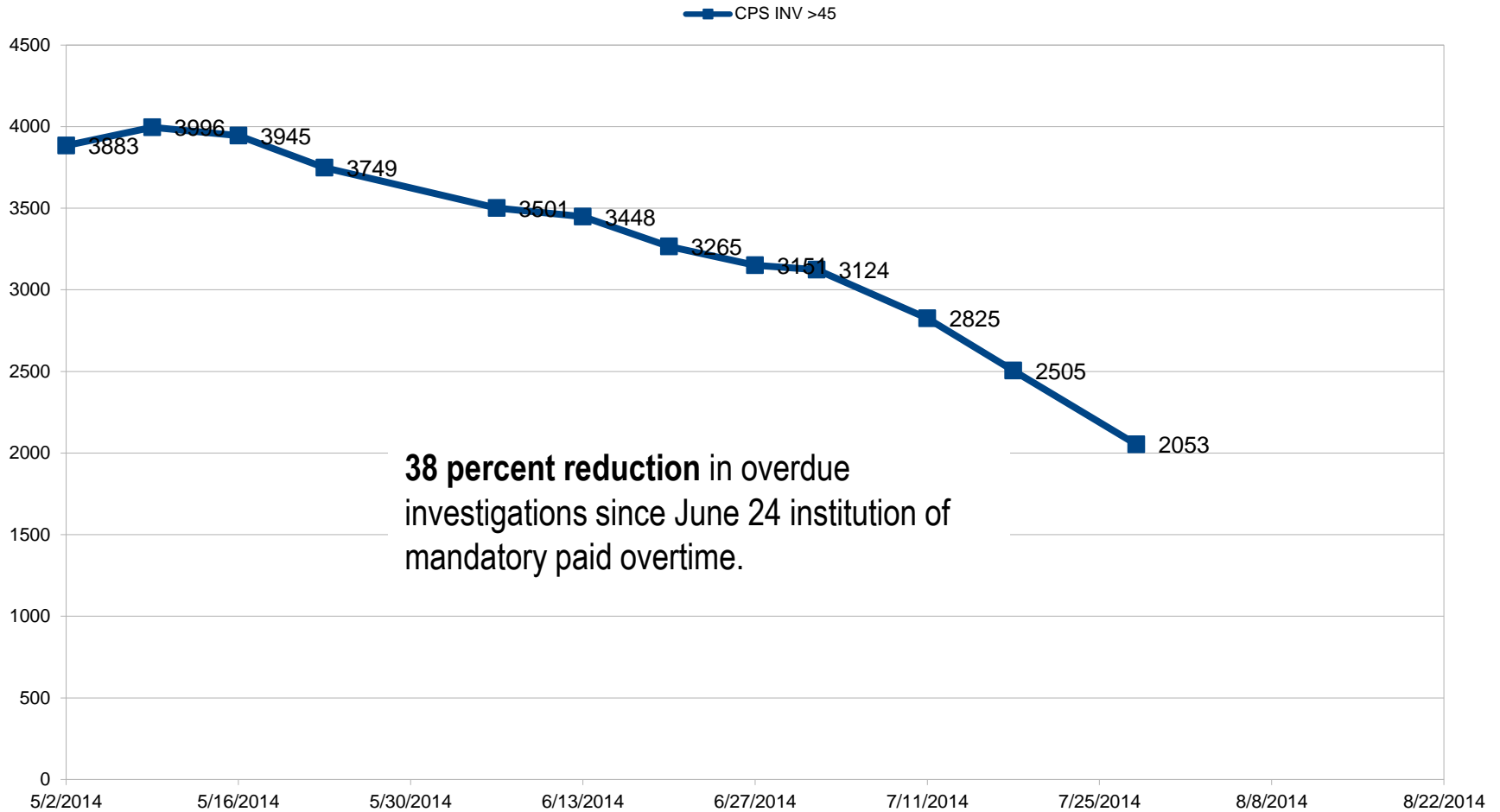


*Kenny A. consent decree caps caseload sizes in Region 14.

**Statewide caseload average is based on June 2014 data.

Overview: DFCS overdue investigations

Investigations pending more than 45 days



*Standard investigation should last no more than 45 days.

*Staff are required to work eight hours of paid overtime in regions with overdue investigations.

Overview: DFCS areas of emphasis

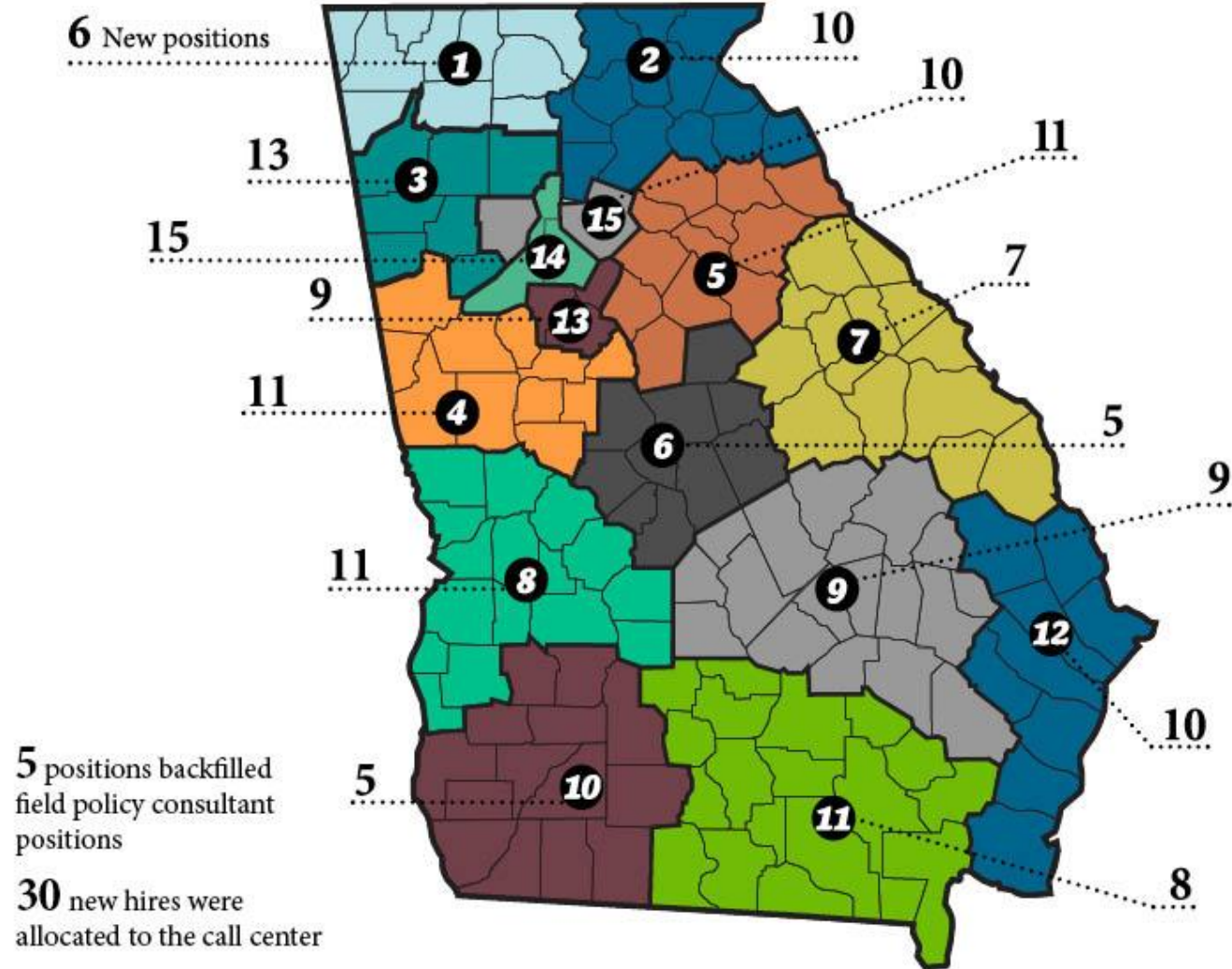
Staffing: Goal is 15 cases per case manager by 2017.

- **FY 2015 budget** included funding for 175 new case managers and supervisors.
 - **140** positions distributed in the field based on local growth in caseloads.
 - **30** positions shored up staffing levels on Centralized Intake Call Center.
 - **5** positions used for field-level policy consulting.
- **July 16, 2014:** Following discussions with Appropriations chairmen in House and Senate and the Office of Planning and Budget, Gov. Deal authorized DFCS to hire an additional 103 case managers and supervisors this fiscal year.
 - Positions will be allocated to Regions based on local growth in caseloads.
- DFCS continues to monitor caseloads and resource needs, providing regular updates to Gov. Deal.



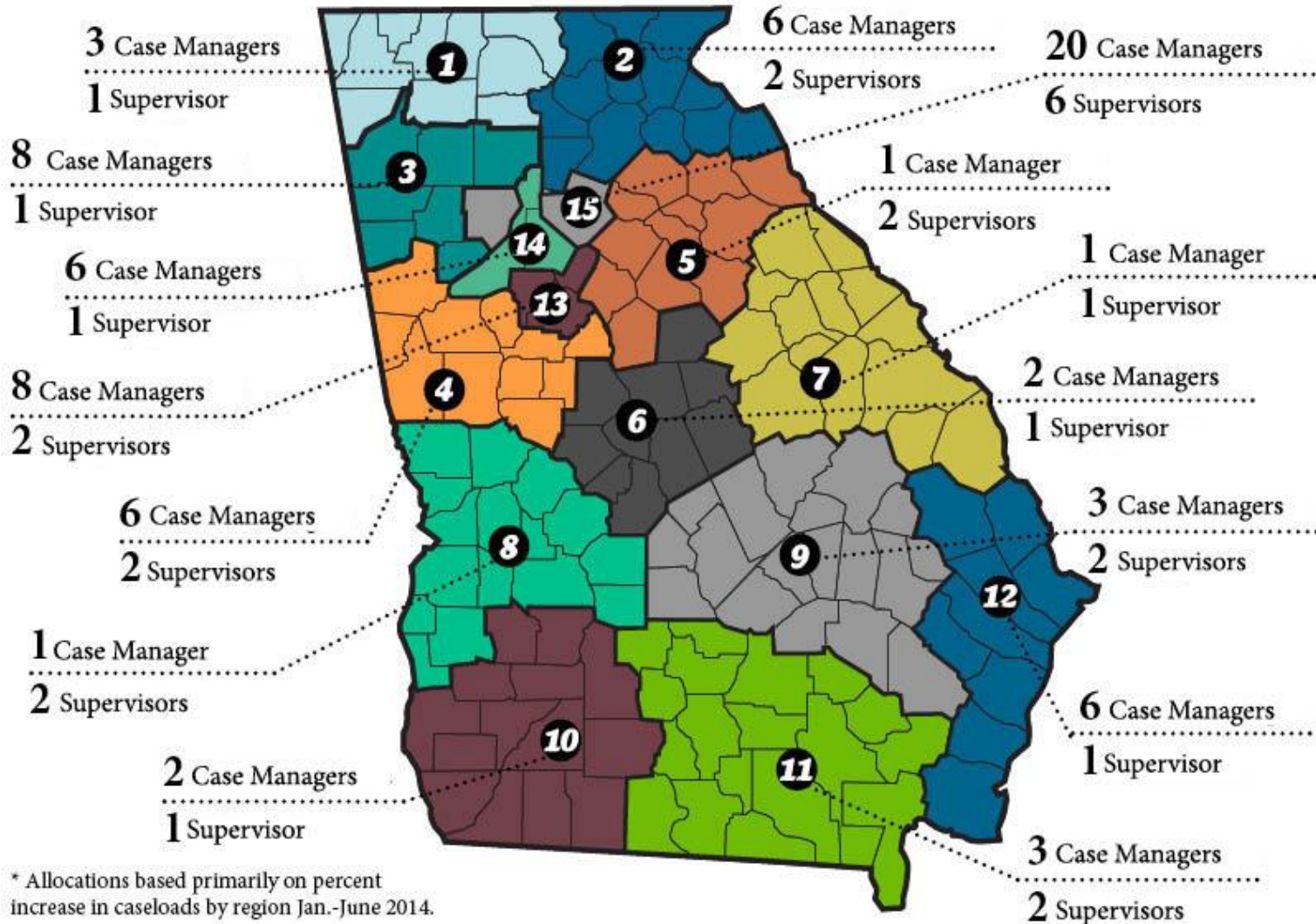
Overview: DFCS areas of emphasis - staffing

STAFF ALLOCATION BY REGION | 175 new staff members approved by General Assembly



Overview: DFCS areas of emphasis - staffing

STAFF ALLOCATION BY REGION | Proposed allocation of 103 recently approved positions*



* Allocations based primarily on percent increase in caseloads by region Jan.-June 2014.

* Allocation methodology is 0.75 employees for every 1 percent growth in caseload. Allocations also include efforts to bring average ratio for supervisors to case managers to 1 to 7.



Overview: DFCS areas of emphasis - technology

Technology Upgrades: Competent and intuitive technology that improves safety outcomes.

- **Field documentation** can be improved with technology upgrades.
 - December 2014: scheduled server upgrade should ease frequent system outages.
 - July 2014: purchase of dictation services speeds documentation for multi-tasking caseworkers.
 - Recently deployed Dragon Naturally Speaking on caseworkers' desktops to allow case updates in SHINES through verbal dictation.
 - Plan to deploy software through smartphones, allowing caseworkers to document in real-time.
- **Access for mandated reporters** will be greater through updates to call center technology and use of web forms.
 - October 2014: addition of new call menu to route callers seeking information on benefits out of CPS call queue.
 - Feature will also send law enforcement calls directly to case managers.
 - January 2015: installation of new call center technology with updated features, including a "call back" function for periods of high call volume.
 - Development of online form for electronic submission of abuse/neglect reports.



Overview: DFCS areas of emphasis – policy and practice

Policy and Practice: Use previous casework as a guide for policy and practice changes that will reduce the risk of children experiencing abuse and neglect.

- **Governor's Child Welfare Reform Council** likely to provide additional proposals based on in-depth review of Georgia's child welfare system.
- **DFCS Annual Child Fatality Analysis** will be strengthened to provide greater opportunity for comprehensive practice improvements that reduce children's risk of abuse and neglect.
- **Nationally-recognized expert** to assess Georgia's system over the next three months, and will provide recommendations for future system improvements. Review will include interviews with staff, stakeholders and analysis of policy and practice.

Other practice changes made based on need:

- **June 2014:** mandatory policy change requiring case managers to interview reporters of abuse and neglect when possible.

