

**CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF ERIE COUNTY
AND STAFFING PROPOSAL TO THE
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
:: JUNE 3, 2014 ::

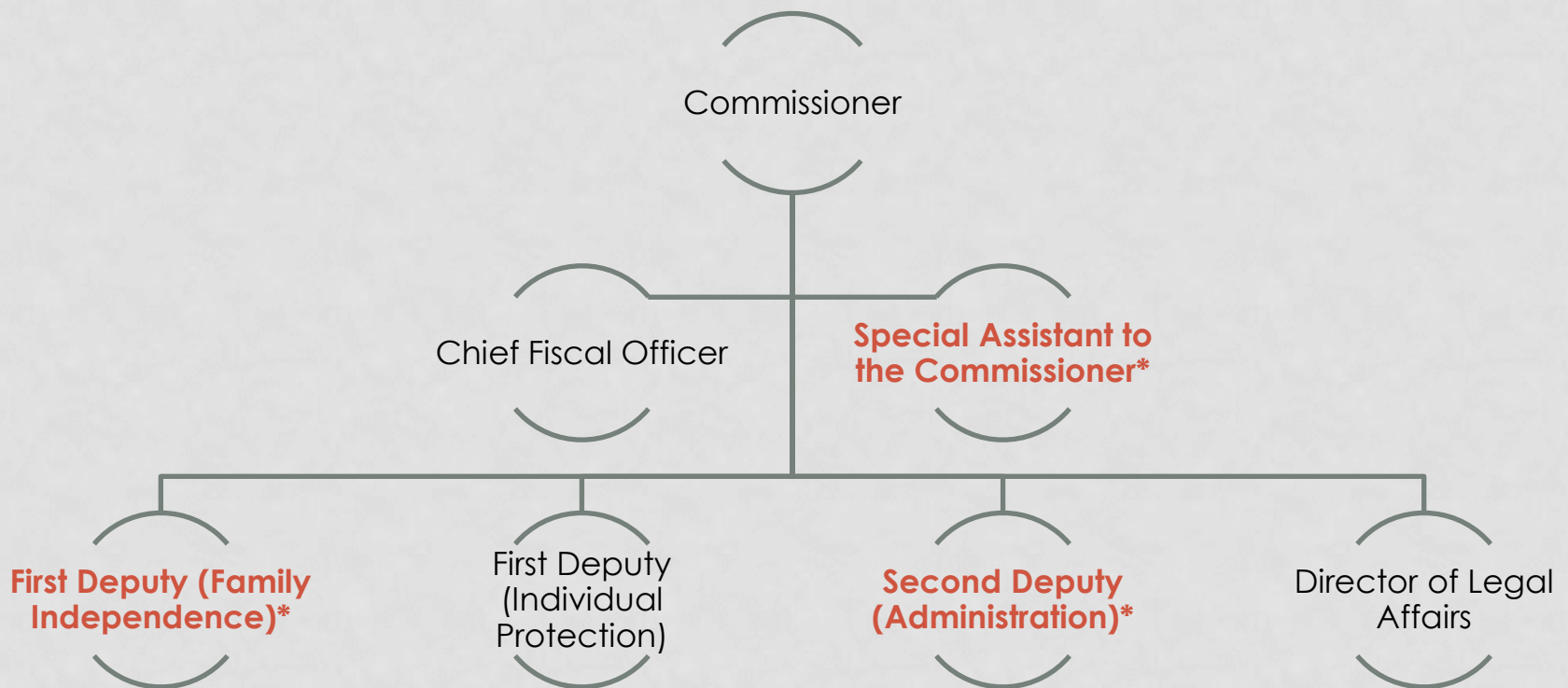
ORGANIZATION

1. Background
2. 2013 Office of Children and Family Services Audit
3. Management Initiatives to Address Backlog
4. Staffing Request
5. Community Response
6. Additional Materials

BACKGROUND

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION



*Added during 2013 DSS Reorganization

CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

- Intake
- 24-Hour Safety Assessment
- Seven-Day Safety Assessment
- Ongoing Assessment & Investigation
- Sixty-Day Determination
- Services

STANDARD FOR REMOVAL OF A CHILD

- Evidence and information gathered during the investigation establish credible likelihood the abuse or maltreatment has occurred.
- Determination is made that current situation presents an *“imminent danger to the child’s life or health.”*
- CPS authorized to remove children and place them in safe home and make report to Family Court the next day.
- Standard of proof for removal is *“preponderance of the evidence.”*

CPS OVERSIGHT FROM OCFS

- November 2011: OCFS conducts an Ongoing Monitoring and Assessment (OMA Audit):
 - Report identifies “*no unresolved safety issues*”
 - Correction action plan approved in 2012.
- May 2012 : OCFS conducts an OMA Audit:
 - OCFS Deputy Commissioner: “*...the strength in Erie County’s child protective investigations occurs in the activities in the first few days of receiving the case.*”
 - Corrective action plan approved.
- September 26, 2013: OCFS begins an audit, to be conducted in two phases: Safety/Risk Assessments and Closing Determinations.

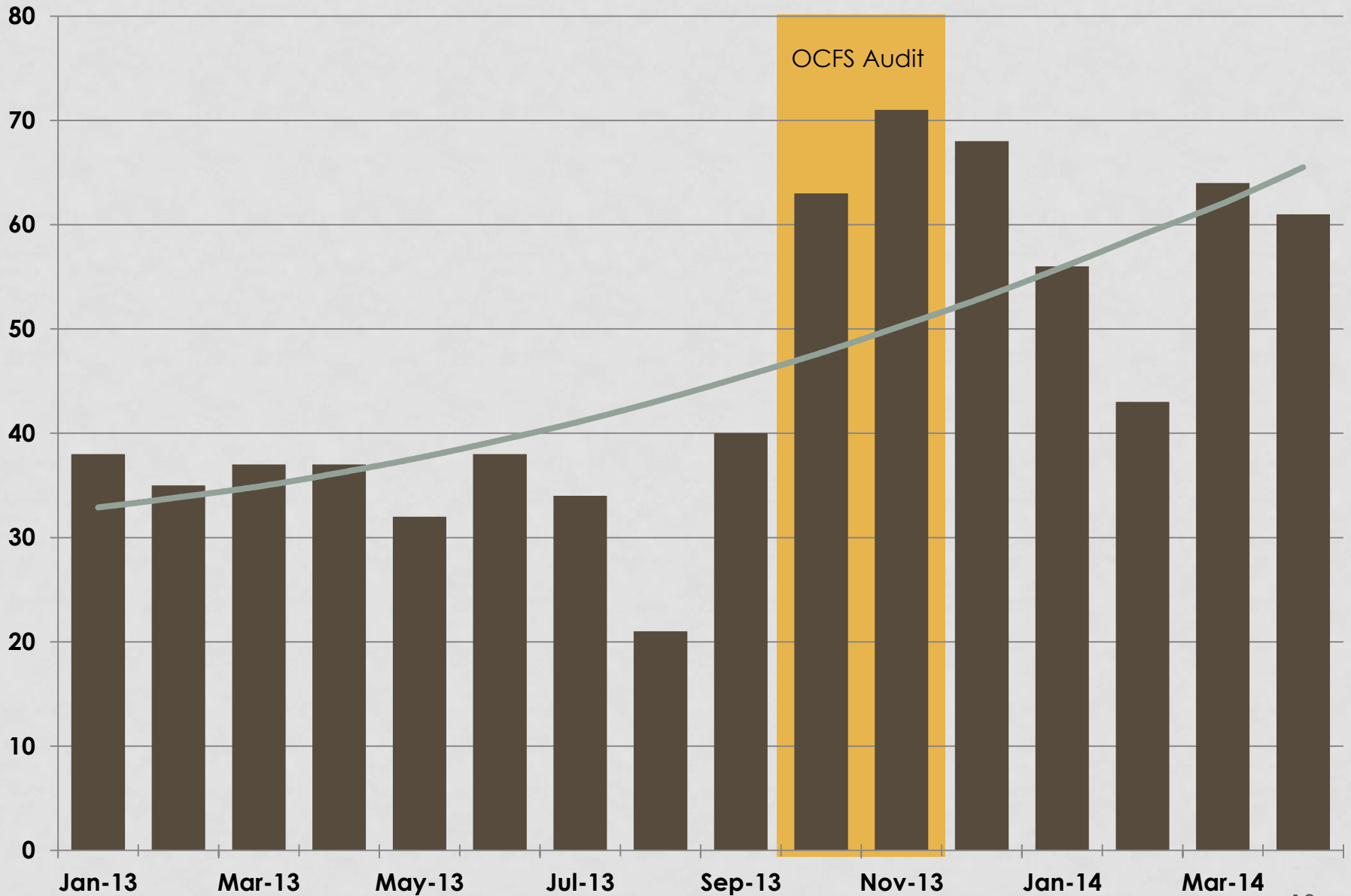
2013 OFFICE OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES AUDIT

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

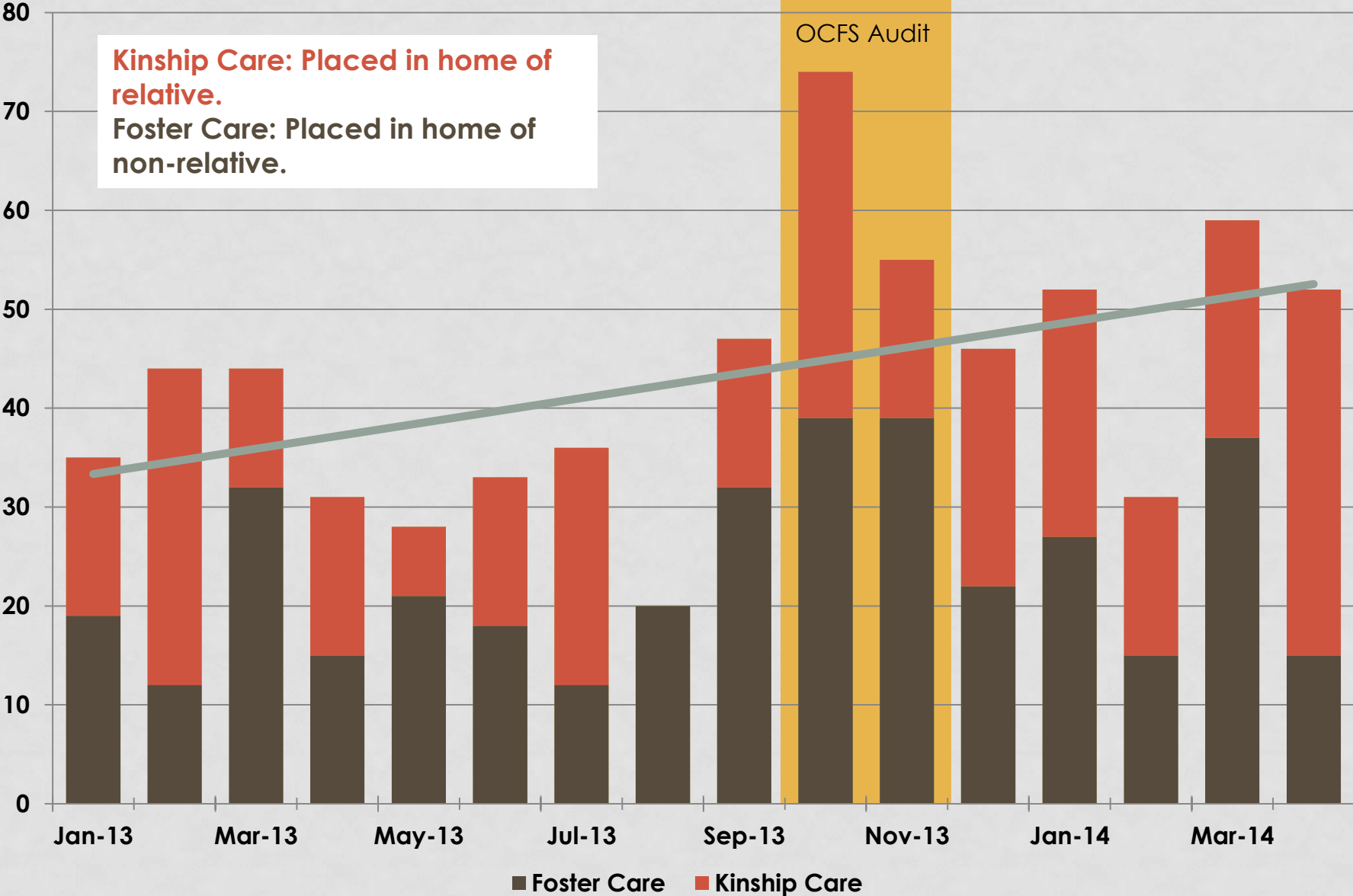
MORE RIGOROUS INVESTIGATIONS

- Erie County enhanced its investigative practice during and after the audit, resulting in:
 - More Petitions filed by CPS in Family Court
 - More out-of home placements
 - More services cases opened

Family Court Petitions Filed by CPS

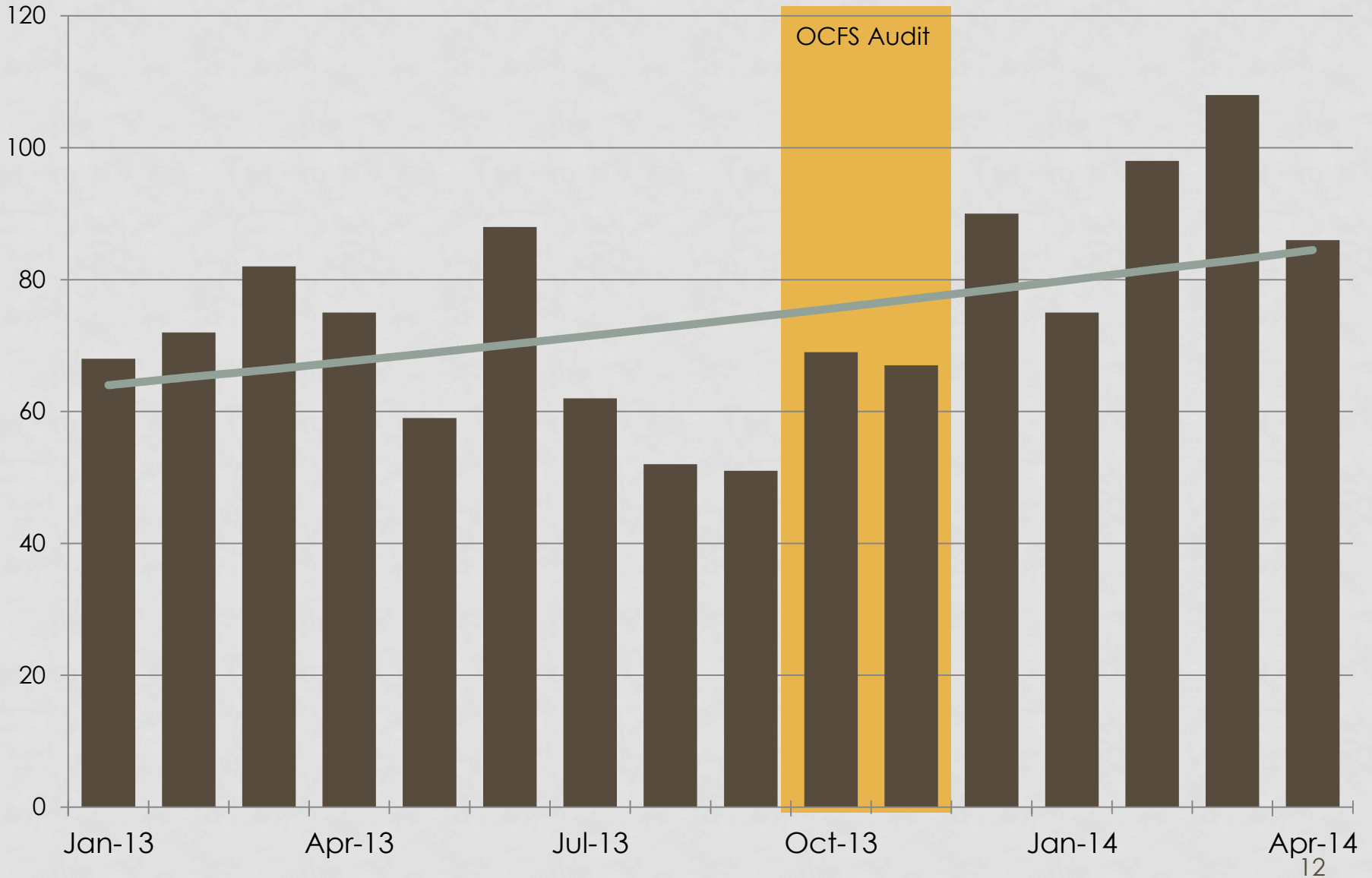


Out-of-Home Placements

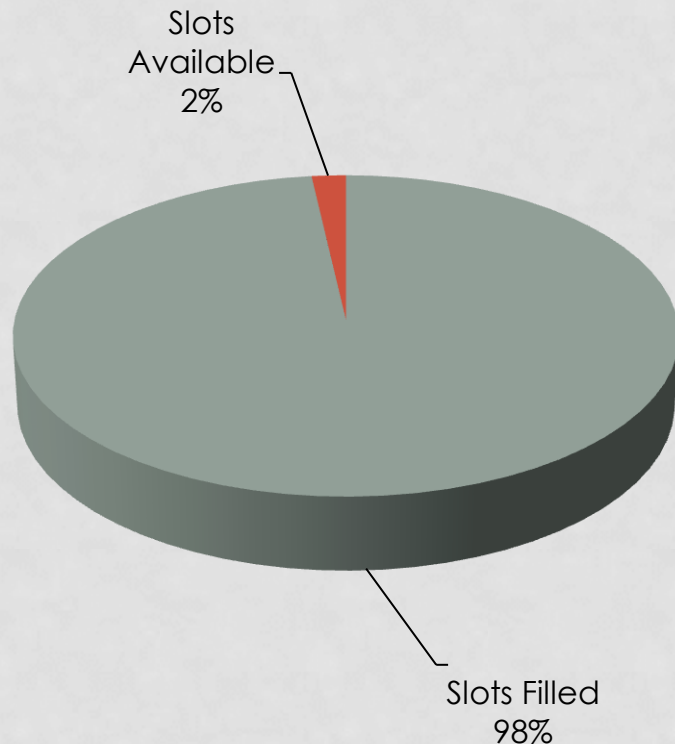


Services Cases Opened

(Parenting Classes, Anger Management, Etc.)



CHILDREN'S SERVICES



- Most contracts with nonprofit agencies are at capacity.
- Logjam created in CPS because cases cannot be handed off to Children's Services.

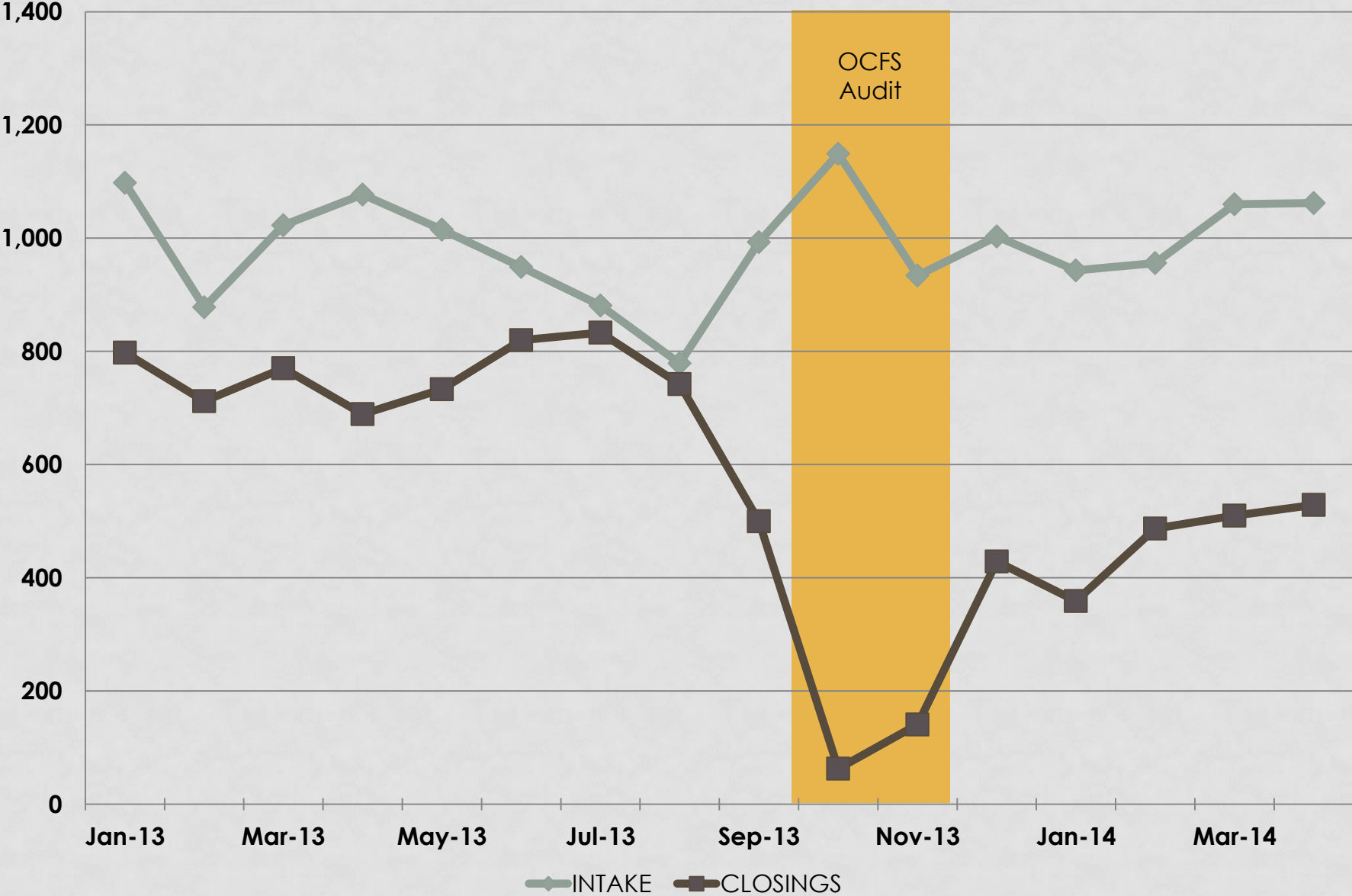
AUDIT RELEASED FEBRUARY 2014

- Case Practice themes noted in February 2014 Audit:
 - Thorough and complete investigations
 - Enhanced interviewing and follow through with collateral contacts
 - Appropriate safety assessments
 - Evidence of supervisory consultation
 - Legal consults
 - Services to families
- “OCFS reviewers noted improved case practice in the investigative process since OCFS completed the Safety Assessment Review in November...”

IMPACT OF AUDIT ON CASELOADS

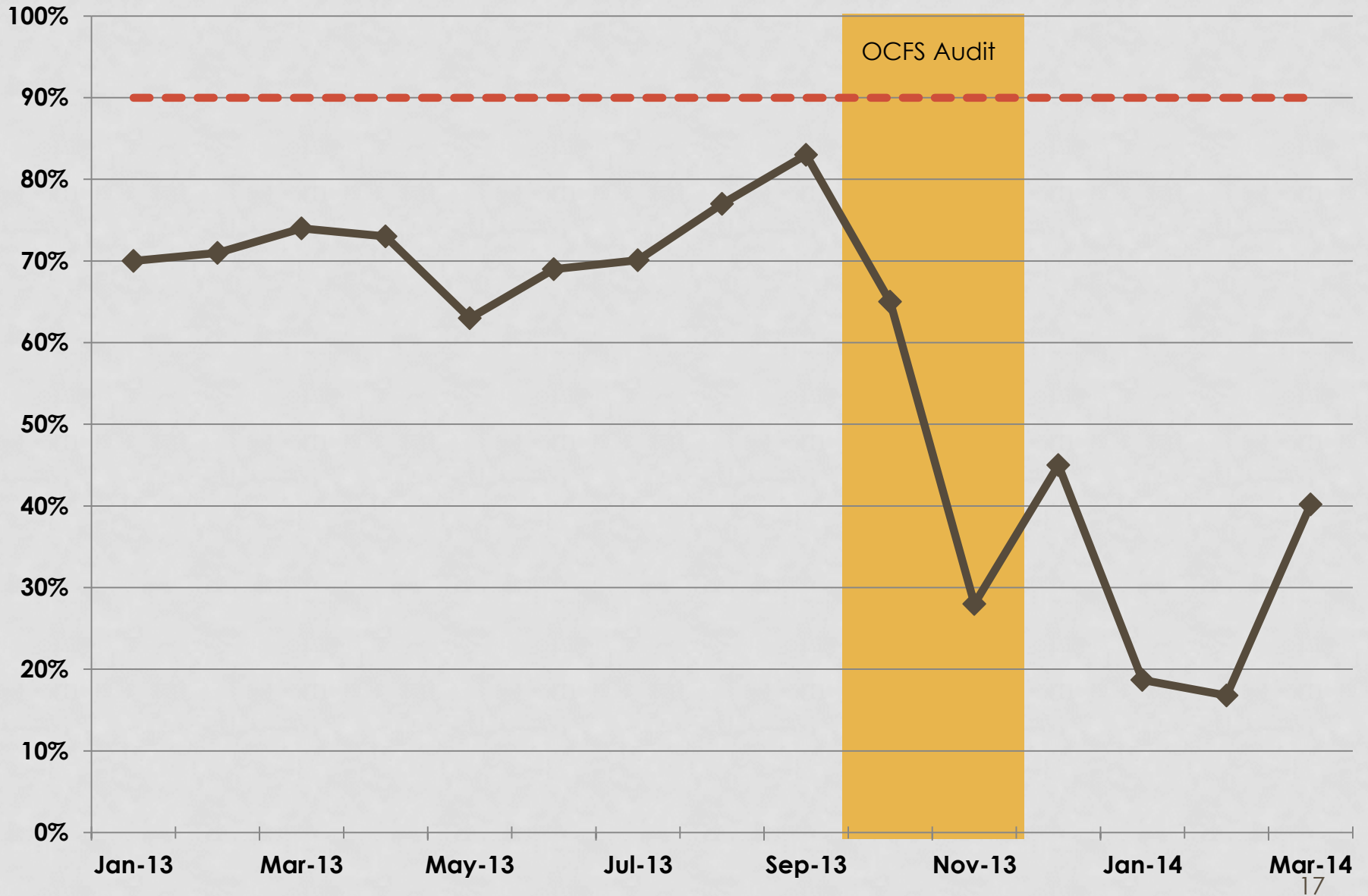
- The number of cases closed during the OCFS audit plummeted during a period in which intake increased.
- There is a backlog of cases which have been open longer than sixty (60) days.
- As a result, the number of cases assigned to each worker increased.

CPS INTAKE VS. CLOSINGS 2013-14

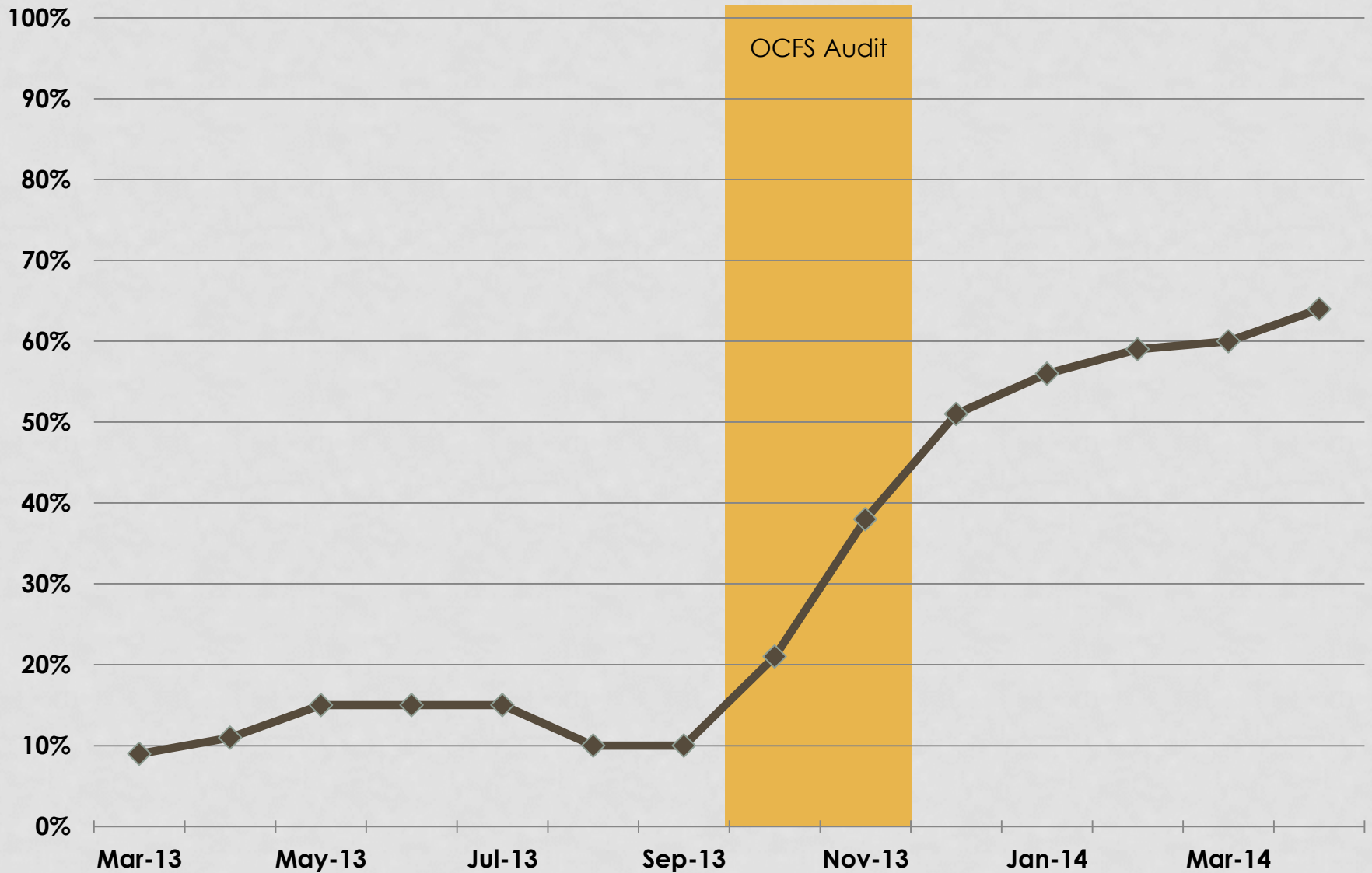


Timely CPS Determinations Completed 2013-14

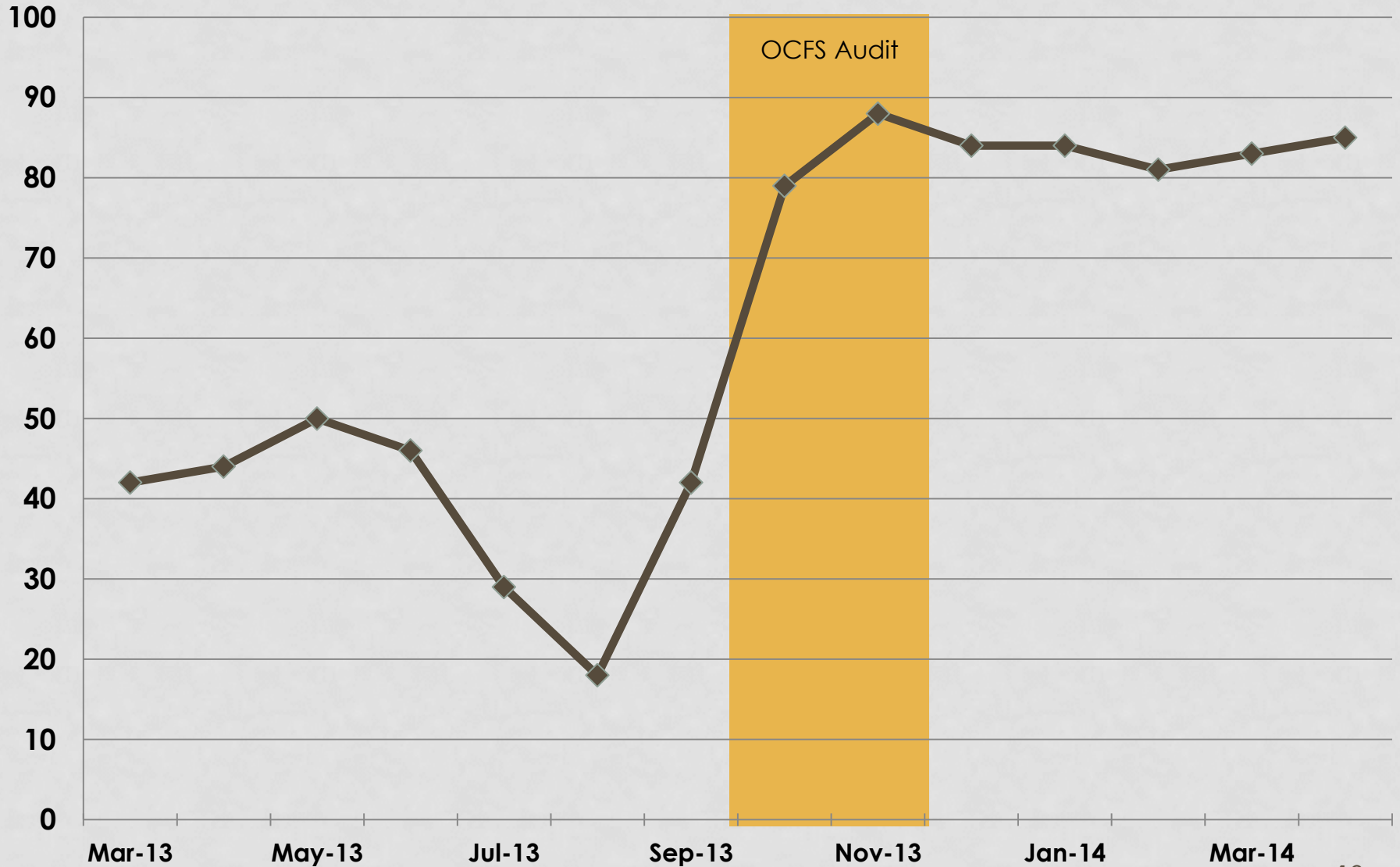
Timely = Within 60 Days



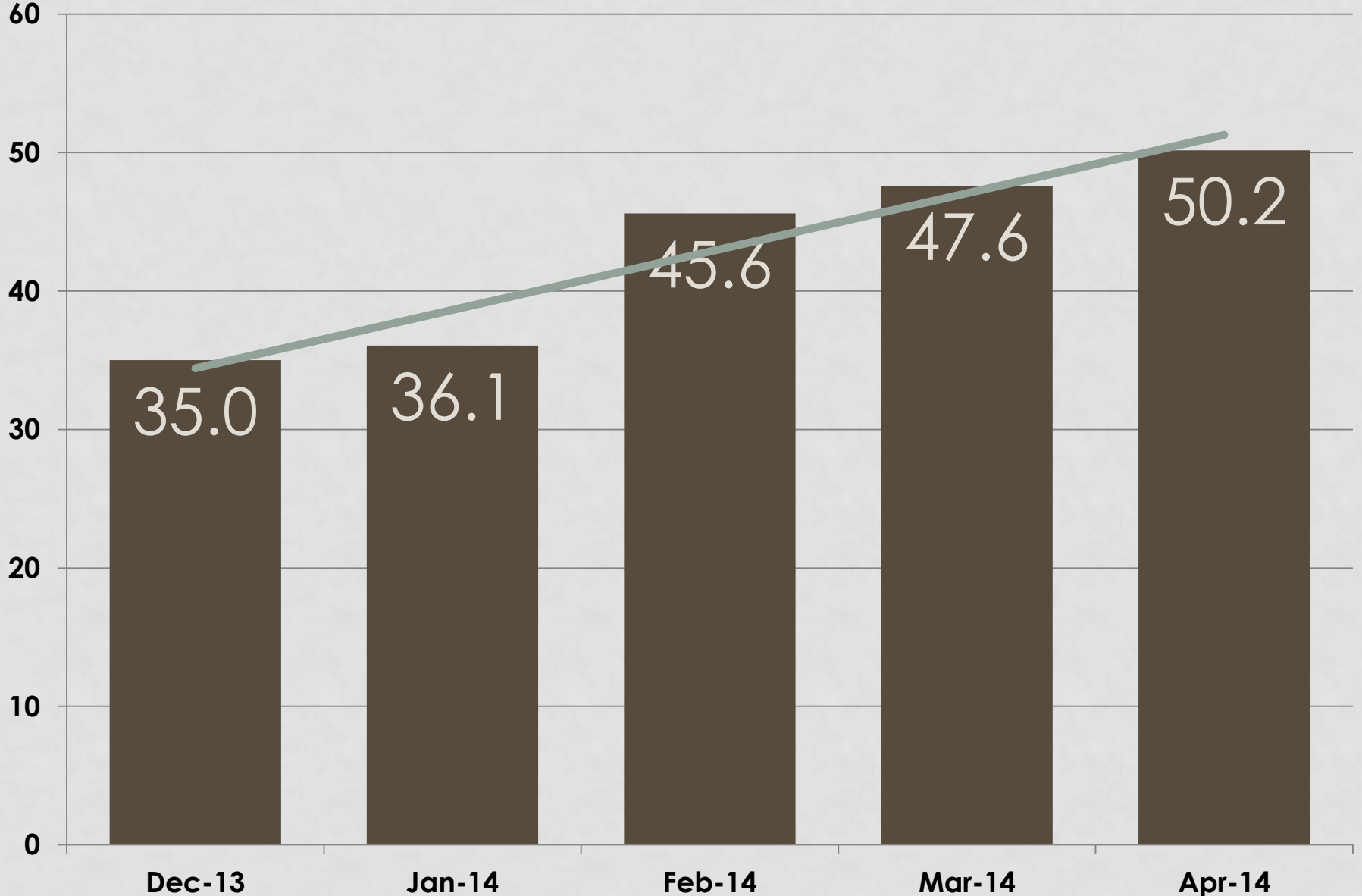
Open Investigations Older Than 60 Days



Percentage of CPS Workers with More Than 15 CPS Investigations



AVERAGE CPS CASELOAD SIZE



MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS BACKLOG

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

BACKLOG CREATES A VICIOUS CYCLE

- Backlog creates additional work:
 - Lack of prompt case closings leads to need to do additional wellness checks.
 - Additional case notes and documentation are required.
 - When reporters are unsure of the status of an investigation, they make additional reports.
 - Workers are too busy to merge subsequent reports on same family, causing duplication of work.

CAUSES OF BACKLOG

- Unprecedented OCFS audit started a chain of events:
 - Internal and external review process on cases impeded closings.
 - Workers lost confidence in their work and did not move to appropriately close cases.
- Systemic improvements in case practice and documentation requiring additional time spent on each case.
- Inexperienced workforce.

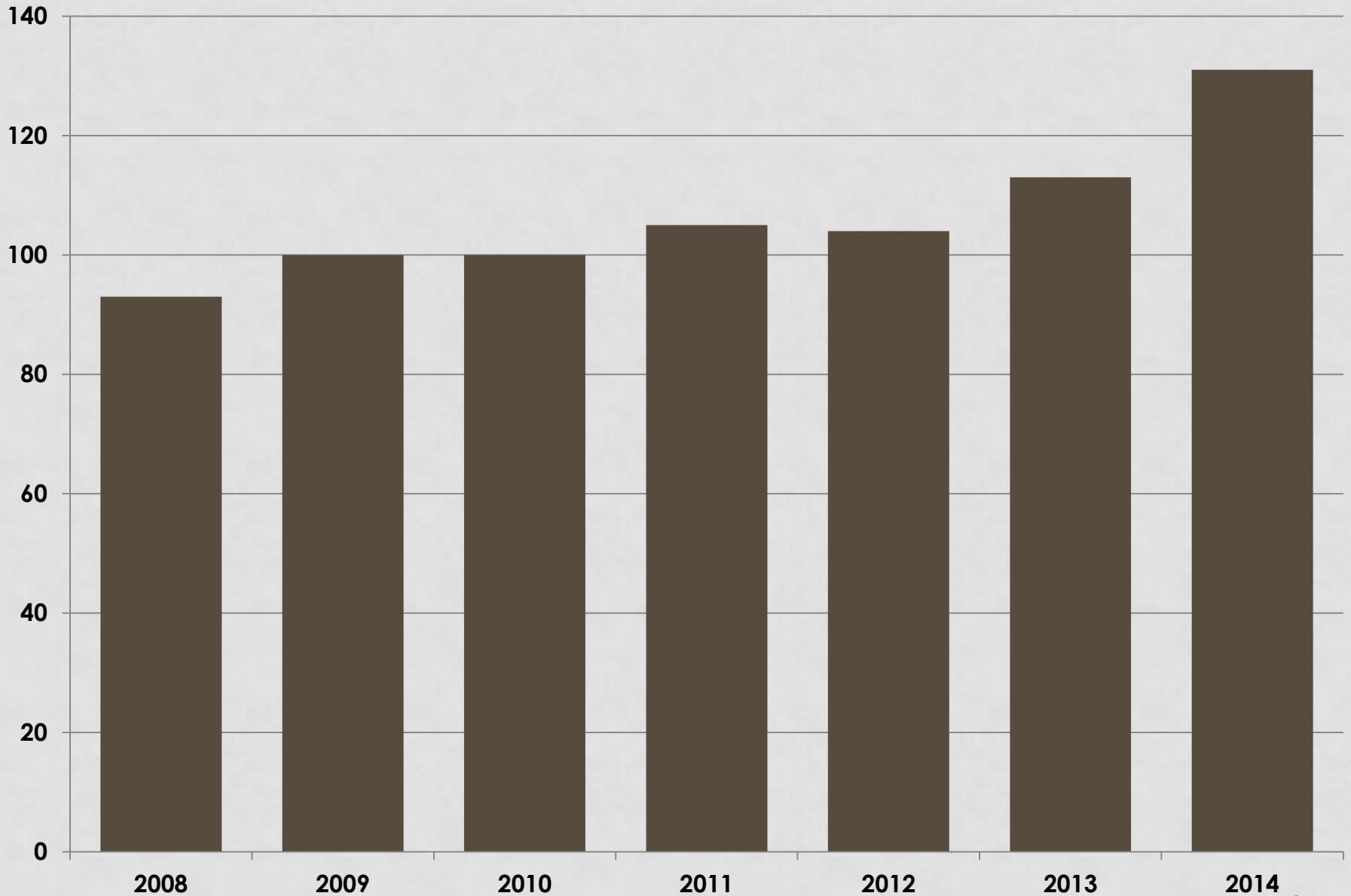
CONSEQUENCES OF BACKLOG

- CPS workers:
 - Their time and attention are diluted.
 - They are severely stressed.
 - They are becoming risk-averse.
 - Some are seeking outside employment opportunities
- Families are stressed because their cases remain open.

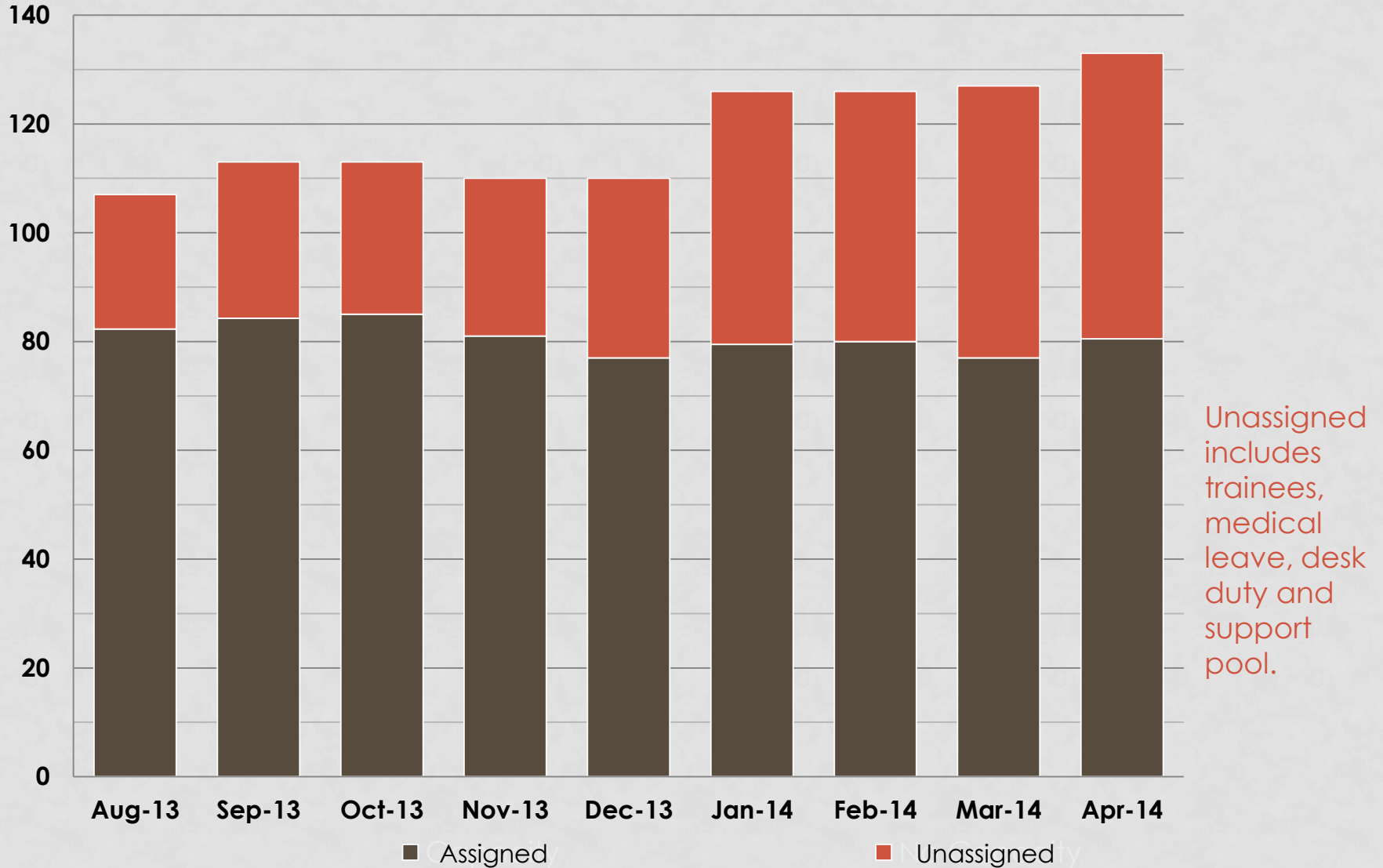
STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE BACKLOG INCREASED WORKFORCE

- Addition of New Positions:
 - September 26, 2013: With Legislature approval, created a new CPS team (one Child Protective Coordinator and six Social Caseworker I's)
 - April 3, 2014: With Legislature approval and CSEA support, created six temporary part-time Child Protective Worker positions.
 - Throughout 2014: Reclassifying vacant positions into CPS job titles.

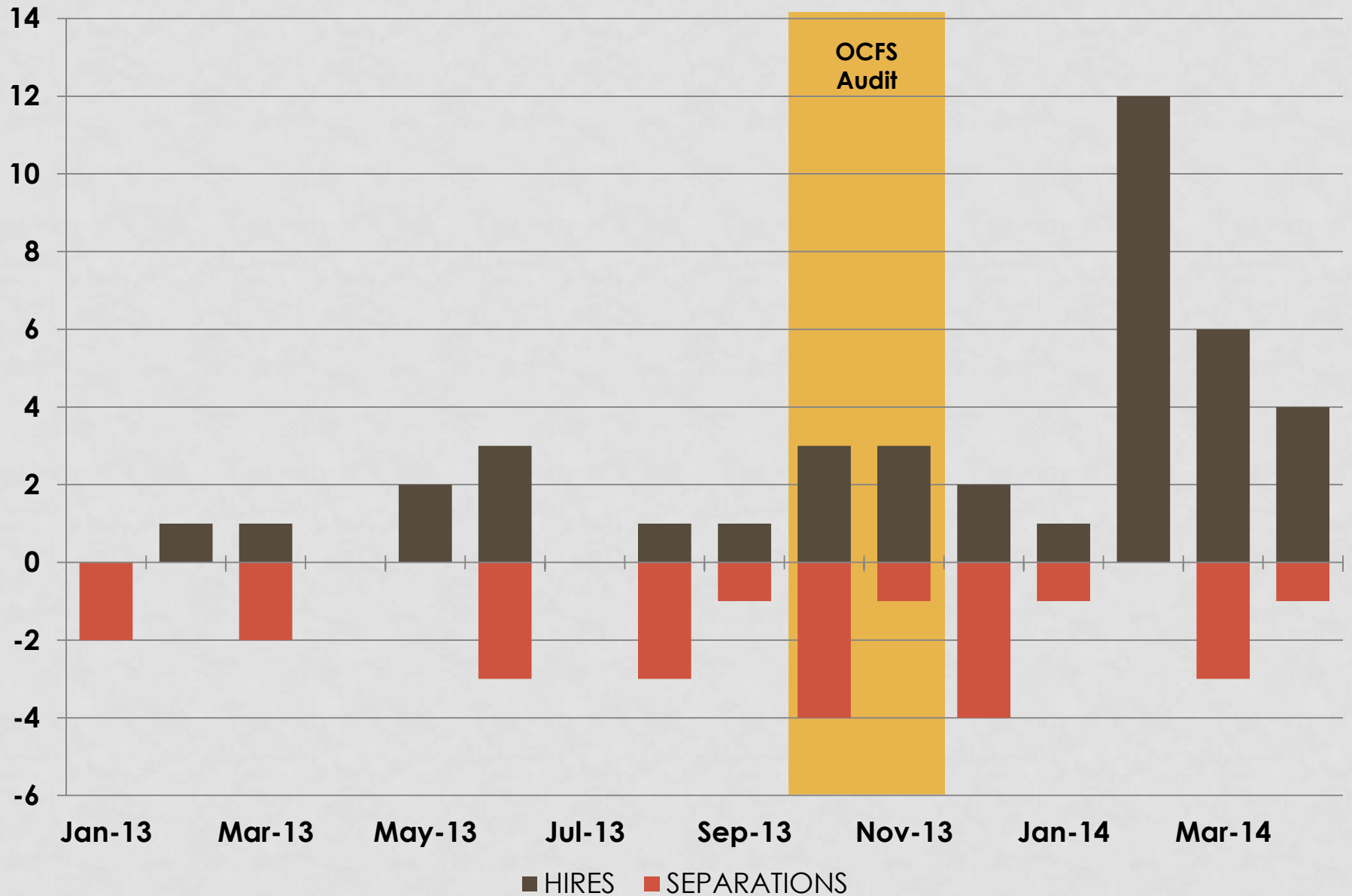
TOTAL INVESTIGATIVE CPS POSITIONS



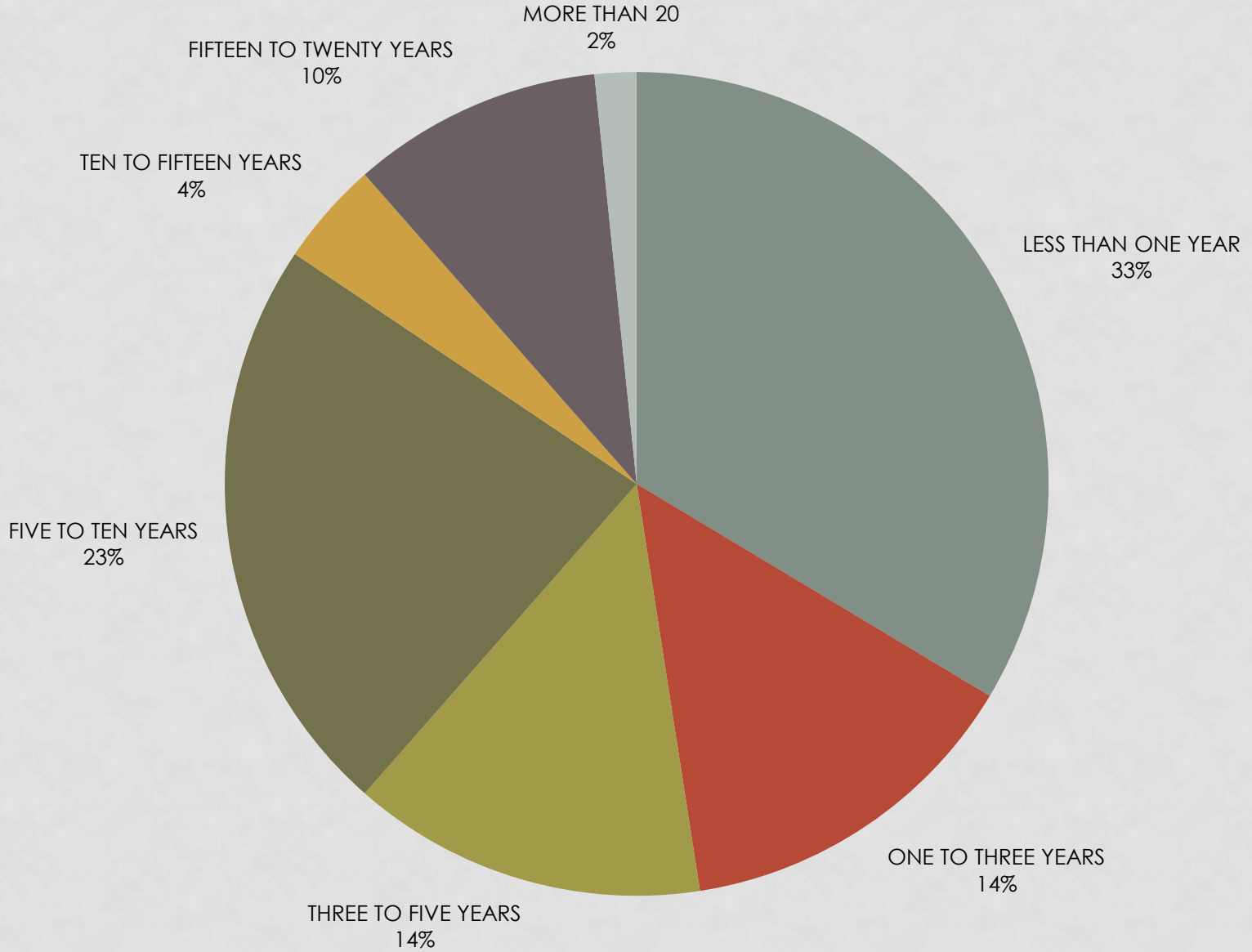
CPS Staff Capacity in Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)



HIRES/SEPARATIONS FOR FRONTLINE CPS WORKFORCE

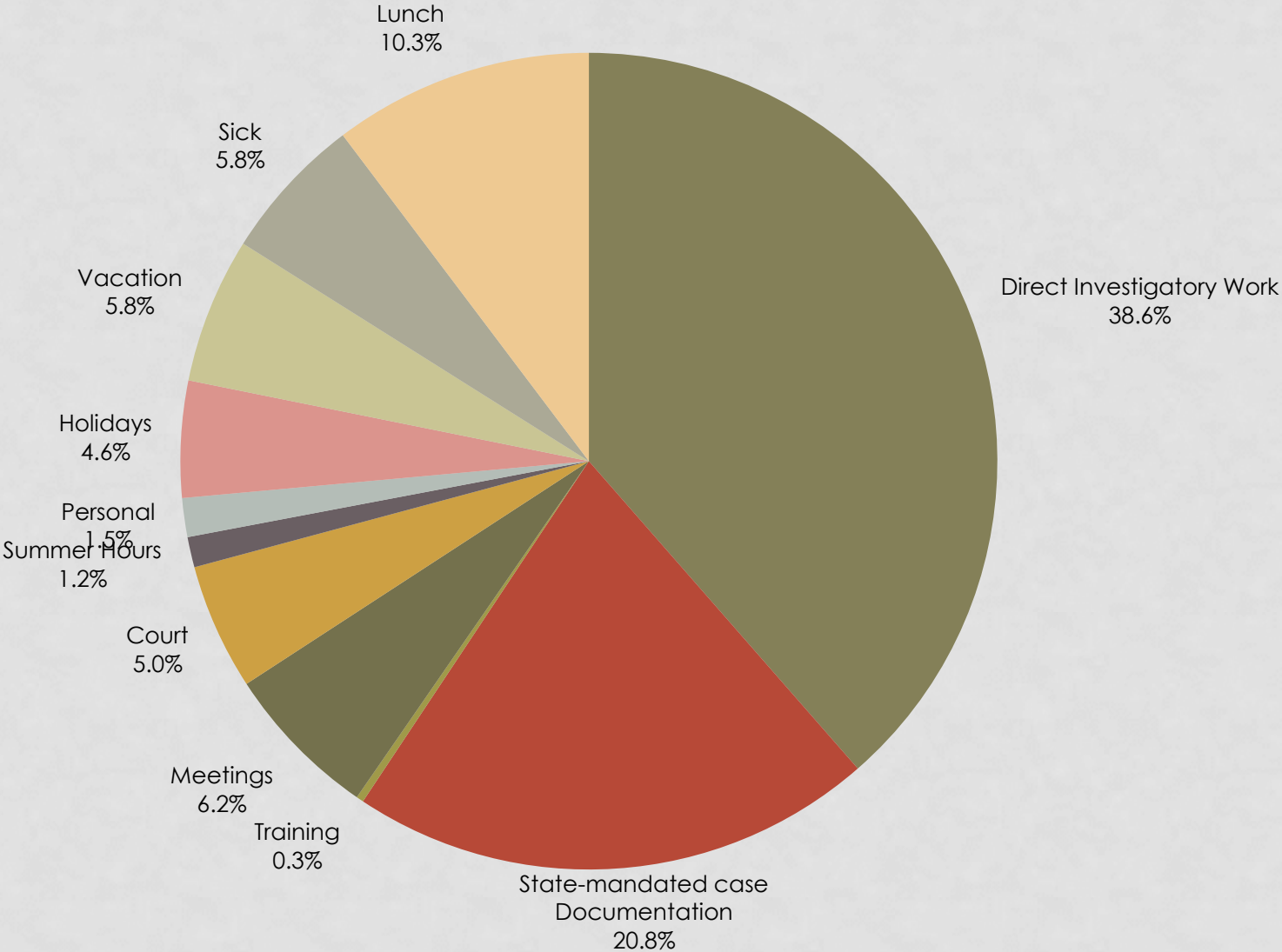


FRONTLINE CPS WORKERS EXPERIENCE



CPS WORKER FTE

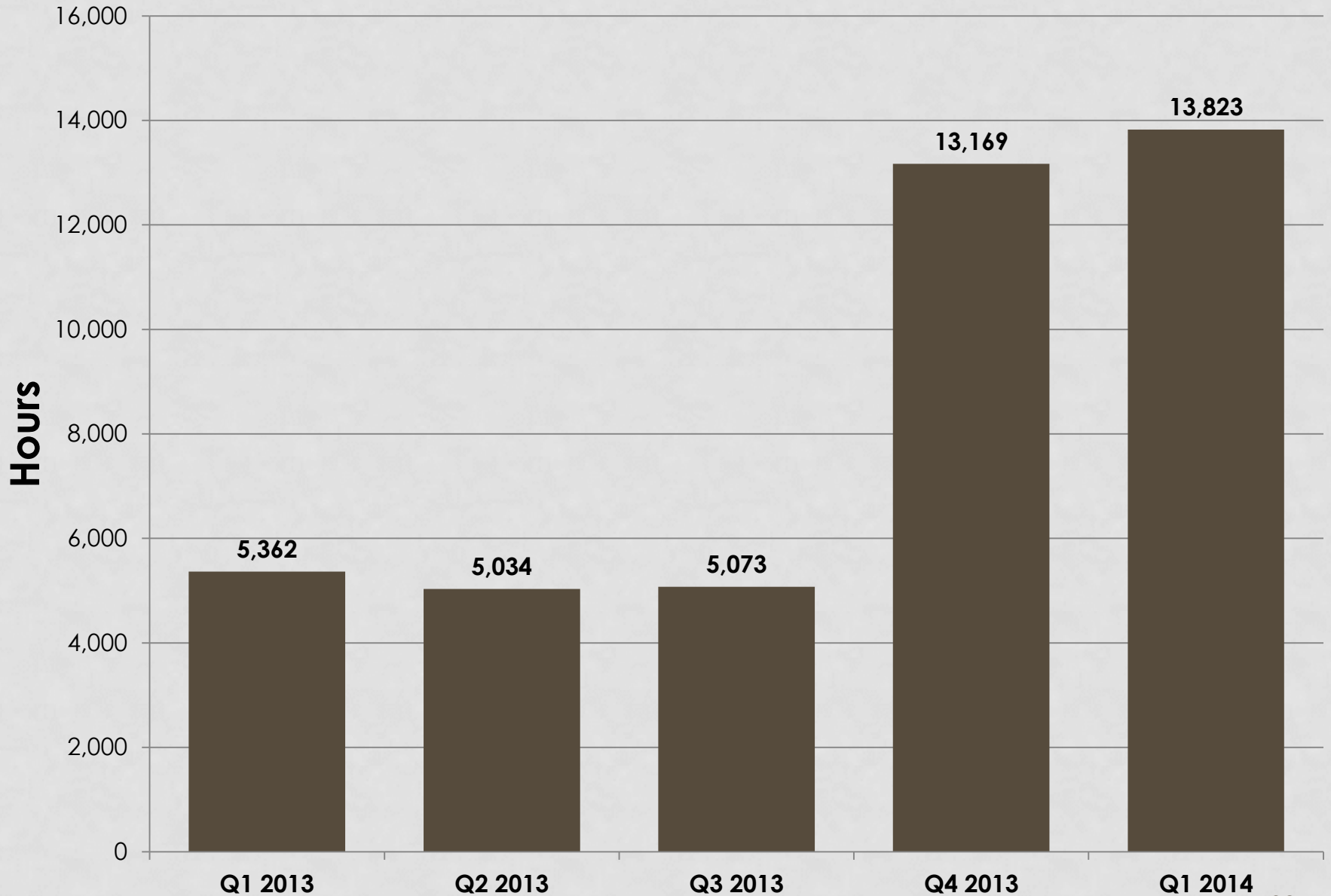
Hours Available For Investigative Work



STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE BACKLOG OVERTIME

- In cooperation with CSEA, increased access to overtime for CPS workforce and allowed workers to do some work (e.g., documentation) from home.
- Recruited DSS workers with CPS training (but employed in other program areas) to voluntarily do child protective work as overtime.
- Working with the Probation Department to recruit Probation Officers who were previously worked in CPS to voluntarily do child protective work as overtime.

Overtime in Child Protective Services



STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE BACKLOG

REALLOCATING EXISTING RESOURCES

- Supervisors performing more direct work, such as home visits and collateral contacts.
- Discontinued the Family Assessment Response team and reinvested in traditional investigative cases.
- Assigned trainees to support case processing on teams.
- Created Intake Team of supervisors and senior management to allow investigators time to close existing cases.
- Erie County Sheriff's Office is performing wellness checks in areas where they have a road patrol.
- Assigned mobile phones and air-cards to employees.

LONG-RANGE INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE

- Assembling Initiatives for a Stronger Community
- Statewide CPS reform legislation to make CPS workers more efficient and effective.
- Finalizing Request-for-Proposal to add two (2) Domestic Violence advocates to Child Protective Services.
- Expansion of SAY YES site facilitators to fourteen (14) additional schools.

LONG-RANGE INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE

- Re-establishing the Erie County Community Coordinating Council on Children and Families with the help of the Casey Family Programs.
- Working with BOCES to improve coordination between local schools and CPS.
- Analyzing the establishment of a local CPS training academy. Administration for Children's Services(NYC) has shared their entire training curriculum
- Awarded RFP to UB School of Social Work to study chronic neglect to improve CPS practice.

STAFFING REQUEST

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

STAFFING NEEDS

- OCFS recommends each investigator have (at most) fifteen (15) cases.
- Erie County receives approximately 1,000 SCR Reports a month, and there should therefore be approximately 2,000 SCR Reports being investigated at any one moment.
- If all cases were closed on the 60th day and caseloads at 15, there would need to be 133 workers at full capacity (i.e., experienced, non-trainee).

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- Twelve (12) Investigators Protective Services
 - Regular Part Time: Three (3) Senior Investigators Protective Services; Three (3) Special Investigators Protective Services
 - Part Time: Six (6) Special Investigators Protective Services
- Three (3) new child protective teams:
 - Eighteen (18) Child Protective Workers
 - Three (3) Child Protective Team Leaders
 - Three (3) Social Services Team Workers
 - One (1) Child Protective Coordinator

INVESTIGATORS PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- Surge: Additional boots on the ground immediately
- New Job Titles: Modeled after position in New York City's Administration for Children's Services
- Erie County Department of Social Services would hire individuals with a law enforcement background to work alongside CPS to ensure safety of workers and children, and navigate law enforcement agencies.
- These persons will be deployed by Team Leaders on high-risk cases.

LONG-TERM STABILITY

- Addition of eighteen (18) Child Protective Workers would result in 151 front-line workers.
- Assuming 12% of child protective workers do not have cases at any one time (e.g., turnover, trainee, or FMLA) , there would be 133 front-line workers accepting cases.
- This would give CPS the amount needed to keep caseloads on average at 15 per child protective worker.

NEW CHILD PROTECTIVE TEAMS

- Three new CPS teams:
 - One team to investigate cases involving special populations where a unique skillset is necessary, such as domestic violence or mental illness.
 - One team to investigate cases with high-risk young children where other risk factors have also been identified.
 - One additional team to investigate cases with sexual abuse or serious injury.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- Children's Services
 - Addition of \$400,000 annually.
 - Increases contract capacity 13% (approximately 90-100 slots).
 - Funds would be used be awarded to contracted providers through a request-for-proposal process.

COST OF PLAN - 2014

Assumes six-months in 2014:

- Personnel Expenses = \$935,537
- Other Costs = \$291,695
- Total Cost = \$1,227,232
- Local Share = \$500,400
- State And Federal Reimbursement: \$726,832

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES