

Title IV-E FFY24 Annual Progress Report

1. Reimbursed Funds Received

	COUNTY	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	TOTAL
1	Apache	\$3,666.01	\$3,715.96	\$3,715.96	\$3,721.79	\$14,819.72
2	Cochise	\$26,745.50	\$26,682.72	\$29,385.84	\$26,462.20	\$109,276.26
3	Coconino	\$43,258.40	\$36,133.56	\$43,559.38	\$38,651.52	\$161,602.86
4	Gila	\$5,407.53	\$5,409.02	\$6,434.90	\$7,347.96	\$24,599.41
5	Graham	\$7,554.00	\$7,414.34	\$8,428.36	\$2,392.56	\$25,789.26
6	Greenlee	\$0.00	\$108.14	\$524.61	\$3,642.51	\$4,275.26
7	La Paz	\$14,759.16	\$18,114.42	\$20,001.40	\$12,779.18	\$65,654.16
8	Maricopa	\$581,557.25	\$692,675.90	\$669,336.44	\$564,155.41	\$2,507,725.00
9	Mohave	\$29,113.73	\$30,065.74	\$40,066.53	\$33,912.45	\$133,158.45
10	Navajo	\$11,627.96	\$9,306.33	\$8,847.53	\$6,368.39	\$36,150.21
11	Pima	\$392,932.21	\$392,760.58	\$483,250.73	\$452,593.47	\$1,721,536.99
12	Pinal	\$98,613.84	\$105,195.89	\$110,837.98	\$112,327.23	\$426,974.94
13	Santa Cruz	\$9,874.22	\$12,417.92	\$7,798.77	\$26,569.16	\$56,660.07
14	Yavapai	\$34,046.53	\$38,037.87	\$49,358.62	\$31,309.47	\$152,752.49
15	Yuma	\$14,935.61	\$20,029.53	\$15,237.42	\$20,465.97	\$70,668.53
	TOTAL	\$1,274,091.95	\$1,398,067.92	\$1,496,784.47	\$1,342,699.27	\$5,511,643.61

NOTE: The 4th quarter reimbursement has not yet been issued to the counties, but this is their expected reimbursement.

2. Utilization of Reimbursed Funds Received and How the Funds are Utilized:

Apache

As reported in previous years, there was an initial cost of \$9,450.88 for the purchase of video equipment. The equipment is to be used for producing podcasts/training videos to make available on the Court’s website. These will include life skill training(s) for teens preparing to age out of the foster care system and provide the tools/skills necessary for living independently. Training videos will include ACEs, dependency case flow through the court system, drug prevention, and resource guides. This resource will also be available to court partners, parents, foster parents, and community members. This project has, however, been placed on hold due to staff turnover. Plans to resume production of these podcasts/videos is scheduled for the beginning of 2025. Navajo and Apache County co-hosted a dependency training in the Spring of 2024. The cost of \$173.25 was utilized for the continental breakfast provided to participants.

Cochise

Title IV-E funds have continued to be utilized towards a paraprofessional position within the Legal Advocate Office. This position continues to assist the dependency attorneys in providing efficient support toward dependency case representation. Funding has also been utilized to enhance dependency attorney's representation by attending mandatory CLE trainings. Dependency attorneys from the indigent defense offices attended the 2024 Arizona Public Defenders Association Summer Conference in Tempe, Arizona on June 19 – 21, 2024. Support staff have also attended webinars from the State Bar of Arizona to help enhance skills needed for dependency templates and motions. Along with mileage reimbursements for attorneys traveling out of county for dependency client visits.

Coconino

Public Defender's Office

In FY24 IV-E Funds were used for 25% of the salary and ERE for one dependency attorney, 10% of the salary and ERE of a second attorney, as well as covering expenses for travel and home visits. The support staff were given additional dependency duties to assist the attorneys on top of their regular workload. Coconino County is huge geographically, and funds were earmarked to enable staff to meet with clients in person wherever their placements were located. The funds reimbursed mileage, paid for transportation, and vehicle rentals. Funds were also used for training, travel, membership fees, and specialized resources specific to dependency representation.

Legal Defender's Office

In FY24, the LDO used Title IV-E monies to fund 100% of the salary of a part-time Social Worker/Parent Advocate and 40% of the salary of a full time Case Worker. In FY24, the LDO also used said monies to provide an additional stipend to contract attorneys to increase their ability to attend various case related meetings for their new dependency cases.

Gila

Title IV-E funds were utilized to operate Gila County Superior Court's "Dependency Case Processing Initiative" (DCPI).

Graham

The County used the funds to provide an increase in pay to dependency representation attorneys.

Greenlee

We used these funds to help sponsor a dependency training for all attorneys, judges and staff members assigned to dependency cases in Greenlee County.

La Paz

Not applicable as funding has not been utilized yet.

Maricopa

The County has used funding for 25% of total amount used to supplant the General Fund, Team Based Parent Representation (TBPR), FAST Dependency Prevention Program, Client Text Messaging Program, and Dependency staff and Parent Social Worker training.

Mohave

During FFY24 through the quarter ending 9-30-2024, program funds were used for personnel expenses for the program staff, and operating expenses such as supplies and items needed to facilitate meetings with dependency partners who are actively involved in enhancing and expanding the program. We continue to conduct Dependency Alternative Program (DAP) hearings, train new DCS staff and retrain existing DCS staff on DAP procedures and to encourage referrals for appropriate families to enter DAP instead of DCS custody. This year we have a pilot program, Family Treatment Court, up and running in our Kingman location.

Navajo

The County hosted and all-day Dependency Attorney Training Apache/Navajo Counties facilitated by AOC CI Program Training Specialist. Navajo County is closely managing cases to meet mandated timeframes, improve attorney/client ratios and improve the ability of attorneys to manage their dependency case load.

Pima

Title IV-E funding covered salaries and employee-related expenses (ERE) for nine staff members, including three attorneys, two social workers, three paralegals, and one support clerk. The funds were also used to purchase essential office supplies and services for these employees, such as bar memberships, case management systems, and cell service for the attorneys. Additionally, Title IV-E funding offset the increased dependency rates for contracted counsel. Finally, the funding supported specialized training for our dependency units—Public Defender Adult Dependency, Legal Defender Adult Dependency, and the Office of Children’s Counsel—to enhance their expertise in handling dependency cases.

Pinal

Pinal County Superior Court began utilizing funds in November 2020. Pinal County developed a team concept where a Judicial Officer is assigned a Dependency only caseload. The team consist of the Dependency Judicial Officer and attorneys whose caseload primarily focuses on Dependency cases. This team concept brings together the Judicial Officer and attorneys to form quality representation to parents and children in the Dependency process. In addition, we have also added additional attorneys to the Dependency caseload and improved attorney-client ratios.

Santa Cruz

No funds were utilized during FFY24. Previously, the funds were utilized for the Santa Cruz County Dependency Conference on March 03, 2023, for the Dependency Case Flow Management team, Baby Steps team, the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) team,

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) team and Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) members. The training was focused on better educating the dependency team in furthering their knowledge in child welfare. For said conference we purchased drinks, snacks, tableware and note taking materials.

Yavapai

The Title IV-E funds were used to pay for partial funding of an in-house dependency position (75% paid by this fund), defense counsel appearances in the (DAP) Dependency Alternative Program, and Contract Counsel. Starting on 9/30/2024, the County began funding for a social worker position to assist the in-house attorneys.

Yuma

The funds were used for attorney fees in Dependency cases and the Yuma County Juvenile Court position - Family Support Specialist. Some of the reimbursed funds were used to pay for expert fees. The Juvenile Court has maintained the Family Support Specialist position. She has been a great asset to the Dependency process assisting parents. The position educates and supports new parents involved in the Child Welfare System and promotes timely permanency planning for dependent youth. This position provides case management support and assists parents with navigating the sometimes confusing and difficult process.

3. Explain the positive effect(s) you have seen/expect to see

Apache

Apache County continues to be committed to resolving cases involving children in a timely manner and providing favorable, permanent outcomes that are in the best interest of the child(ren). In FFY24 Apache County has decreased the number of open/pending cases from 20 cases in 2023 to 18 cases in 2024.

Cochise

The County has seen a positive effect from Title IV-E funds. Title IV-E has allowed our county to add additional paraprofessional support to the Legal Advocate department. The added support has increased productivity towards dependency case representation. We expect to continue this kind of support within the department. Additionally, we are able to ensure our dependency attorneys and staff are kept up to date with the latest rules and mandates by attending trainings in person or through webinars.

Coconino

Public Defender's Office

The additional funds, reduced caseload, and support from a paralegal, legal assistant, and social worker, have allowed the attorneys to dedicate more time to each case and better serve our clients' needs. The attorneys were able to attend conferences to further increase their abilities to serve clients. Overall, the increased ability to form a specific dependency team (attorney, paralegal, social worker, legal assistant) has made a noticeable positive effect on representation. Most notably it has allowed our social worker to travel and visit our clients.

Legal Defender's Office

Title IV-E funds allowed the LDO to hire a Parent Advocate/Social Worker and increase the hours for our Child Advocate/Social Worker. This allows for more frequent contact with clients and improves client participation in services and court. The Advocates work frees attorneys to work their cases utilizing their legal skills. The combined effect is better, more comprehensive representation increasing the likelihood of successful reunification. Title IV-E funds have allowed the LDO to offer stipends to contract attorneys. Contract attorneys are essential to ensuring that all parents and children in dependency proceedings have representation. This stipend has helped contract attorneys offset increased costs related to recent rule changes. That said, contract dependency attorneys remain scarce. It is hoped that the stipend at least partially incentivizes contract attorneys to continue accepting cases.

Gila

Between April 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, the funds were utilized to assist one (1) new family involved in a Gila County dependency case in which services were offered to parents. Between April 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, there were over ninety emails sent/received involving the case in the program. There was one DCPI meeting conducted and several informal meetings/conversations with stakeholders. The DCPI program consists of two to three conferences for each case, in which the families and stakeholders are ordered to participate in at the Pre-Hearing Conference, along with subsequent reporting and follow up. At the Pre-Hearing Conference, the parents are provided with a packet that has important contact and service information on case specific services directed and behavioral changes identified whenever possible. At the first conference, the parents are handed binders which assist in participation, compliance and tracking of the services and behavior changes of each parent. At the last hearing, DCS was granted permission of the Court to transition the active DCPI case into an in-home dependency with the parents. The child in this case is under three and permanency (without active DCS involvement) is anticipated in the next three to six months.

Graham

The funds were used to provide an increase in pay to dependency representation attorneys since 7/1/2023 on the per case amount they receive for representation.

Greenlee

We have learned of possibly implementing new programs in our rural county and have better equipped dependency attorneys.

La Paz

Not applicable as funding has not been utilized yet.

Maricopa

Maricopa County Public Defense continues to utilize multidisciplinary teams to help parents reunify with their children in parental dependency cases. In FFY23 we added 2 additional social workers to the staffed offices. We also built out space and purchased

vehicles for the social workers. The staffed offices are continuing to add cases to their workloads. We are in early discussion regarding contracting for Parents with Lived Experience. The text messaging software implemented in FFY22 that sent out court reminders to parents on their dependency matters proved to be unfruitful and the software usage has been discontinued.

In FFY23, we started a Dependency Prevention program intended to assist families confronted by the possibility of separation through state intervention (FAST). The program was initially intended to target the opioid use disorder (OUD)/substance use disorder (SUD) population. We currently have one attorney housed in Public Defense Services for this program. Program planning and development took about a year and the attorney has since started taking cases. Once the program further established, we intend to evaluate expanding services to additional populations. FAST won an award for the National Association of Counties.

Mohave

Dependency program staff now assist in our Family Treatment Court sessions. We are hopeful that we can effect change in families to rehabilitate parents and, where it is safe to do so, keep parents and children together. During FFY24, we had 31 DAP referrals which included 37 children. There were 18 finalized outcomes which included 17 cases In Loco Parentis agreements and 1 successor Guardianship. There were 8 cases where the dependency was filed with the court, and there are 5 cases still in the process, pending a temporary family law order or DAP hearing.

Navajo

Navajo County has been meeting mandated time frames and managing attorney/client ratios to improve the ability of attorneys to manage their dependency case load. Further, the County has focused on training judges, attorneys and support staff on updated laws and best practices that enhance case flow processes and representation.

Pima

Pima County has achieved more manageable dependency caseloads through the use of Title IV-E funds. Attorneys now have the capacity to devote more time and attention to each case, thanks to improved attorney-client ratios. Additionally, increased support staff have been able to provide direct client assistance, facilitate home visits, and process disclosure more promptly. The higher contract rates have successfully attracted enough contract attorneys to manage the volume of dependency cases. Dependency-specific training opportunities further enhance the expertise of both attorneys and support staff, improving the overall quality of client representation.

Pinal

Attorneys whose primary caseload are Dependency cases have increased the quality of representation for both child and parents. The Judicial Officer whose caseload solely comprises of Dependency cases has allowed the Court to meet time standards.

Santa Cruz

No funds were utilized in FFY24.

Yavapai

We continue to see lower caseloads, which allow attorneys to spend more time per case, increases the quality of the representation, and helps improve outcomes for children and families. We continue to participate in DAP with the goal of reducing the number of children removed from their homes while still assuring safety. We have also provided another resource for our children and families to reach out and communicate with when trying to find the right services to be successful.

Yuma

The County has had improved compliance with court-ordered case plans, improved parental engagement and participation in the Dependency process, reduction in the number of case continuances, reduction in participant anxiety about the Dependency process, increased trust of the Department of Child Safety, and an increase in the number of family reunifications.

4. Future Plans: Explain how you anticipate using reimbursed monies in the upcoming fiscal year.

Apache

As reported in 2023, Apache County is exploring the possibility of developing a court liaison to work with court partners. Since the DCS office within Apache County has closed, and all cases being transferred to the Navajo County DCS office, parents, foster parents, attorneys, etc. need additional assistance with communication, resource information, and case flow management. This individual will help fill the void of the vacated DCS office in Apache County. 75% of IV-E funds will be allocated to enhance/develop this position. The remaining 25% will be set aside for education/training purposes, including the development /production of the video training library.

Cochise

Title IV-E monies will continue to support the paraprofessional position within the Legal Advocate office. We plan to continue to find ways to use funding to enhance attorney and client representation throughout the fiscal year.

Coconino

Public Defender's Office

In the upcoming fiscal year, we plan to spend funds on part of the salaries and EREs of the dependency specific attorneys and support staff. We want to continue to pay for our attorneys and staff to attend informative trainings. Our goal is to continue to travel for home visits and maintain direct client contact. Occasionally, the travel to the outskirts of the county can result in over four hours of travel. We have one company vehicle, meaning it is necessary for staff to use their own vehicle and be reimbursed for milage or to rent a car. Additionally, our plan for FFY25 is to enhance the courtroom technology and the training and networking opportunities for the whole dependency team.

Legal Defender's Office

The LDO intends to use Title IV-E funds as it has for FFY24—that is, to fund the Advocate positions and pay stipends to contract attorneys. The LDO will also use Title

IV-E funds to pay for attorney training on an as-needed basis. The LDO does not anticipate any significant new expenditures out of Title-IV monies as we have committed to funding the Advocate positions for the next two fiscal years.

Gila

Gila County will continue to utilize IV-E funds to support its DCPI program, as we feel this is an essential program to have available to families. In addition to funding DCPI we plan to utilize some of the surplus funds to partially support the contract with the facilitator providing services to the DCPI program. Gila County will continue to seek new initiatives in accordance with the funding agreement and with the approval of Gila County's judicial officers and AOC.

Graham

The Court will continue to use the funds for the increased attorney rate. The Court is also hoping to establish other programs such as a mentoring program.

Greenlee

We plan to sponsor more local trainings in hopes of strengthening all our visions for better dependency representation. Our hopes are to implement a DAP program with these funds in the foreseeable future.

La Paz

La Paz has drafted a plan for a future Dependency Alternative program and/or a meditation program for dependencies.

Maricopa

For FFY25, we will continue the TBPR program, as it has been immensely successful. We will also focus on expansion of our FAST Dependency Prevention program. We will also be using some of the remaining prior(s) year balance to fund the dependency portion of our new case management system implementation. This funding will also be used to maintain contractor caseloads at reasonable levels.

Mohave

We will continue to fund the personnel expenses for our two staff members who support the DAP and now Family Treatment Court (FTC) programs, as well as the necessary operating expenses. We need time to get FTC firmly established and make program adjustments before we push it out to the other cities in our county.

Navajo

The funds will be utilized on the Dependency Alternative Program.

Pima

As our fund balance continues to decrease, we are no longer able to sustain our current level of spending, as expenses are outpacing revenue. To address this shortfall, we plan to request General Fund support to cover the salaries of dependency employees, while continuing to use Title IV-E funds to cover the increased rates for dependency contract attorneys.

Pinal

We work closely with the Office of Public Defense Services and have a comprehensive plan in place to monitor Dependency numbers and making sure that there is quality child and/or parent representation in Dependency. In addition, we are also tracking Dependency numbers to ensure that we are adhering to time standards and that Dependency hearings are scheduled in a timely manner.

Santa Cruz

We would like to use Title IV-E funds to upgrade our audio/visual (A/V) courtroom system. Being in a rural community, we rely mostly on attorneys from Tucson which is approximately one hour away. As such, the Court allows attorneys and other parties to attend via Zoom. The new A/V system would capture the Zoom meeting and incorporate it onto the recording. Having the new A/V system would allow for a better video and audio recording for possible appeals. It would capture the Zoom meeting which facilitates attorneys and other parties appearing remotely. Thus, helping us improve the attorney/client ratio because it will be easier to contract attorneys if they can appear via Zoom. This would also help attorneys improve the ability to manage their dependency caseload because it will reduce their travel time.

Yavapai

Starting in December of 2024, we plan to begin funding part of a new attorney position with these funds; we will be reducing the percent of the other so both will be at 50%. This will allow this funding to be used on both sides of our County with the goal of continuing to improve services and reduce the filings.

Yuma

The Family Support Specialist will continue assisting the families in need. We will also use some of the reimbursed monies to pay attorney's fees. We will continue to explore other options to use the funds to benefit Yuma County and the children in need.