

## Title IV-E FY23 Annual Progress Report

### 1. Reimbursed Funds Received

	<b>County</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	Apache	\$3,020.90	\$2,854.41	\$2,889.97	\$2,947.19	\$11,712.47
2.	Cochise	\$18,280.01	\$17,828.67	\$22,610.87	\$20,615.82	\$79,335.37
3.	Coconino	\$45,730.60	\$33,514.52	\$40,367.39	\$36,727.37	\$158,339.88
4.	Gila	\$9,103.58	\$8,378.76	\$9,186.24	\$7,431.86	\$34,100.44
5.	Graham	\$4,775.81	\$2,378.47	\$8,324.27	\$2,253.73	\$17,732.28
6.	Greenlee	\$610.44	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$202.26	\$812.70
7.	La Paz	\$18,768.52	\$17,437.22	\$18,085.60	\$15,992.93	\$70,284.27
8.	Maricopa	\$933,35.49	\$750,139.62	\$745,635.53	\$502,423.18	\$2,931,523.82
9.	Mohave	\$48,593.62	\$41,532.23	\$42,841.86	\$25,374.06	\$158,341.77
10.	Navajo	\$10,560.80	\$8,314.02	\$8,958.34	\$9,138.59	\$36,971.75
11.	Pima	\$456,638.26	\$348,834.49	\$289,798.49	\$392,929.48	\$1,488,200.72
12.	Pinal	\$105,032.80	\$101,611.02	\$93,498.98	\$96,723.55	\$396,866.35
13.	Santa Cruz	\$8,884.29	\$8,314.07	\$7,298.44	\$14,698.38	\$39,195.18
14.	Yavapai	\$42,426.49	\$37,007.68	\$40,893.44	\$39,105.92	\$159,433.53
15.	Yuma	\$12,971.78	\$15,298.15	\$16,905.37	\$16,276.94	\$61,452.24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,718,723.39</b>	<b>\$1,395,443.33</b>	<b>\$1,347,294.79</b>	<b>\$1,183,330.01</b>	<b>\$5,644,302.77</b>

### 2. How much reimbursed money has been spent and how were the funds utilized?

#### Apache

As reported in FY22, 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 the backlog of cases brought on by the COVID pandemic. Plans to resume production of these podcasts/videos is scheduled for the end of 2024.

Navajo and Apache County co-hosted a dependency training in the Spring of 2022. The total cost utilized was \$279.93 for the meal/lunch provided to participants.

#### Cochise

As of January 2022, Cochise County has used Title IV-E funding towards a paraprofessional position within the Legal Advocate Office. This position has continued to assist dependency attorney's in providing effective support toward effective dependency case representation.

Title IV-E funds have also been utilized to enhance dependency attorney's representation by attending trainings. Dependency attorneys from the three indigent defense offices have attended two conferences this year which included:

- Arizona Public Defender Association 2022 Winter Conference in Tempe, Arizona on December 13-16, 2022.
- Arizona Public Defender Association 2023 Summer Conference in Tempe, Arizona on June 28-30, 2023.

### **Coconino**

#### *Public Defender's Office:*

FY23 IV-E Funds were used for 25% of the salary and ERE for one dependency attorney, as well as covering expenses for travel and home visits for a contract attorney. 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:*

Funds were used in FY21 for salary and ERE for increasing the hours of our social worker who supports representation of children as well as some technology to allow staff to meet remotely with clients during the pandemic. In FY22, the LDO continued to fund the increase for the social worker dedicated to representation of children and was able to hire a second half-time temporary social worker dedicated to supporting the representation of parents for the third and fourth quarter of FY22. We had a vacancy in the parent advocate position for the second quarter of FY23 but rehired in January 2023. For FY24 we have transitioned the temporary position to a permanent half time position. To receive approval for the increase in the original social worker's position and facilitate hiring the second social worker permanently, the LDO committed to having adequate funding in this account for both positions for FY24 as well as FY25. A small amount of funds was used to support our social workers receiving dependency training. In FY23, the LDO also began using these funds to provide an additional stipend to contract attorneys to increase their ability to attend various case related meetings for their new dependency cases. As predicted, the new juvenile rules increased attorney travel expenses and we used a small part of this fund to pay for some of those increased costs.

### **Gila**

Between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, the funds were utilized to assist three (3) new families involved in Gila County out-of-home dependency cases in which services were offered to parents. Of the three (3) new families, there were seven (7) parents and eight (8) children. Of those eight (8) children, three (3) were under three years of age. Between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, there were over two hundred emails sent/received involving cases involved in the program. There were approximately five meetings conducted. 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.

### **Graham**

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

### **Greenlee**

We used the funds to help sponsor dependency training for all attorneys, judges and staff members assigned to dependency cases in Greenlee County. Without said funds, funding for the training would be unavailable.

### **La Paz**

Not applicable as funding has not been utilized yet.

### **Maricopa**

The County has used funding to design and implement the Team Based Parent Representation (TBPR), Client Text Messaging Program, Dependency staff and Parent Social Worker training, and piloting their Dependency Prevention Program.

### **Mohave**

During FY23 through the quarter ending 9-30-2023, 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. In addition, discretionary funds were used to offset a portion of Court Commissioner and Judicial Assistant personnel expense due to the expedited and lengthy nature of our Dependency Alternative Program hearings.

### **Navajo**

The county hosted an 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 was used for the salary and ERE for ten dependency employees – four attorneys, three social workers, two paralegals, and one support clerk. Funds were also used to purchase general office supplies for those employees, bar membership, cell service for the attorneys, etc. In addition, we utilized Title IV-E funding to pay for the increased dependency rates for contracted counsel. Finally, we provided dependency specific training to our dependency units – Public Defender Adult Dependency, Legal Defender Adult Dependency and Office of Children’s Counsel.

### **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**

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 funds were used to pay for one staff attorney and contract counsel. These funds have also been used to assist with the implementation of DAP in Yavapai County.

### **Yuma**

We have used the funds for attorney fees and for an expert in dependency case defense. The Court also used the funds for a Family Support Specialist who works primarily with parents involved in dependency matters.

### **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 FY23 Apache County has decreased the number of open/pending cases.

#### **Cochise**

Title IV-E has allowed our county to add additional positions within our indigent defense offices to help continue toward effective dependency case representation. With the additional support, this has relieved the attorney's time to assist in additional pending dependency matters. We expect to see a consistent number of dependency cases assigned to our indigent offices rather than solely relying on

contract attorneys. Additionally, we can ensure our dependency attorneys are up to date with the latest rules and mandates toward dependency cases through their attendance at mandatory CLE trainings.

### **Coconino**

#### *Public Defender's Office:*

The additional funds, reduced caseload, and support from a paralegal and legal assistant, have allowed the attorneys to dedicate more time to each case and better serve our clients' needs. With the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lifted, the funds have allowed the attorneys to travel again and have direct client contact. 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.

#### *Legal Defender's Office:*

Having increased funding for our child focused social worker continues to allow more frequent contact with clients, better attendance at CFT meetings and increased time for attorneys to work on their cases, all of which results in better representation of children. The addition of a half time parent focused social worker has allowed for the same benefits for the parent clients. The LDO was fortunate to recruit a previous DCS worker who has significantly improved our ability to actively represent parents throughout the dependency case. In addition to the benefits outlined above for the child focused social worker, this parent support position continues to be able to provide guidance and help to the parents to increase their success in the reunification process. For FY23, the LDO was able to improve dependency representation in the contract attorney arena by designating funds to help contract attorneys with increased attendance at various case related meetings. However, despite this the LDO notes that for various reasons, including the lack of financial benefit to dependency contract attorneys, the LDO's bank of available contract counsel has been reduced from six to two. The LDO has been trying to recruit new dependency contract attorneys without success so far.

### **Gila**

Gila's DCPI continues to positively impact two key areas of the dependency process: 1) enhancing the ability of court-appointed attorneys to access and analyze pertinent information regarding services for parents and children thus increasing the efficacy of representation; and 2) the constant movement cases towards permanency, ideally family reunification. As there has recently been a slow-down in the number of cases referred to the DCPI program, the topic will be addressed at Gila's continuing Dependency Case flow meetings. The Dependency Case flow meetings are attended by judicial officers, court staff (including Court Administration and the Clerk of Court), DCS staff, Assistant Attorney Generals assigned to Gila, and CASA staff. The next such meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2023. At that meeting, the Court Administrator will begin soliciting input from stakeholders as to how the DCPI program may be adjusted our expanded to encourage larger participation.

### **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. It is \$200 additional for every dependency case they cover.

### **Greenlee**

We have seen better trained attorneys and we hope to continue to develop a well trained and equipped local dependency bar.

### **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 FY23 we added 2 additional social workers to the staffed offices. We also built out space and purchased vehicles for the social works.

The text messaging software implemented in FY22 that sent out court reminders to parents on their dependency matters proved to be unfruitful and the software usage has been discontinued.

In FY23, we started a Dependency Prevention program intended to assist families confronted by the possibility of separation through state intervention. The program is still in the planning and development stages and will initially target the opioid use disorder (OUD)/substance use disorder (SUD) population. Once the program is implemented and established, we intend to evaluate expanding services to additional populations.

#### **Mohave**

During FY23, we had 22 (Dependency Alternative Program) DAP referrals, which included 29 children. Of the 22 referrals, DCS filed 4 new cases which had no agreements; 2 cases resulted in custody agreement with another parent; 1 case resulted in a guardianship; 1 case resulted in the child being emancipated; and 14 cases resulted in third-party decision making. The Dependency team works very closely with DCS day to day and has been meeting with various stakeholders to implement services for Family Treatment Court in the coming months.

#### **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 realized more manageable dependency caseloads. Attorneys can dedicate more attention and time to each case as attorney-client ratios improved and the additional support staff have provided direct assistance to clients, assisted with home visits, and processed disclosure timelier. The increased contract rate had the desired effect of attracting enough contract attorneys to handle the volume of dependency cases in Pima County. Dependency specific trainings afforded both attorneys and support staff the opportunity to gain additional knowledge to better represent their clients.

#### **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**

In FY24, the monies will be utilized to fund our conference. This past year, the conference was very successful, and the participants have asked that we do this conference on an annual basis.

#### **Yavapai**

We have seen lower attorney caseloads, which allows attorneys to spend more time per case, thus increasing quality of representation and helping improving outcomes for kids and families. Dependency Alternative Program (DAP) is expected to help reduce the number of children removed from their homes while still ensuring safety.

#### **Yuma**

Some of the funds expended have been utilized for attorney's fees assigned in Dependency cases. Providing competent attorneys has a specific impact on the child's representation.

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.

In December 2021, the Yuma County Conflict Administrator approved the cost of an expert to conduct a case review on a Dependency that alleges abuse of an infant. Both counsel for mother and father agreed that a forensic expert opinion from a doctor would greatly assist their defense in the Dependency case. Some of the reimbursed funds were used to pay the cost of the expert witness.

- 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.
- Increase in the number of family reunifications.

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

##### **Apache**

Pursuant to 7 .1.17 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**

We anticipate continuing funding of the additional Legal Secretary position for the Legal Advocate department. We also plan to use funds toward initiatives to attract new contract dependency attorneys to our county.

##### **Coconino**

As noted above, to get approval for the social worker positions we committed to continue to have funds for the present and next fiscal year. We are maintaining funds to meet this commitment. We will continue to fund our social worker being full time with a view to having that available again for FY25. We have also transitioned to a permanent half- time social worker with the specific intent of supporting parents in accessing services and facilitating reunification occurring in a shorter timeframe. This position also backs up the child social worker as needed. We are committed to funding this position through FY24 and FY25. Additionally, for FY24, the LDO will continue to seek to improve dependency representation in the contract attorney arena by supporting training and providing additional stipends as appropriate.

##### **Gila**

Gila would anticipate continued funding for its DCPI program, which may undergo an operational overhaul or expansion. Additionally, given the surplus of available funds, additional programming, including possible new initiatives, may be considered (subject to approval by Gila's judicial officers / AOC, and in accordance with the funding agreement governing the use of Title IV-E funds.)

##### **Graham**

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

##### **Greenlee**

Greenlee County hopes to improve the quality of dependency trainings including seeking ways to improve on prior trainings.

##### **La Paz**

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

### **Maricopa**

For FY24, we will continue the TBPR program, as it has been immensely successful. We will also focus on implementation and expansion of our newly created Dependency Prevention program. Lastly, we will also be using some of the balance to fund the dependency portion of our new case management system implementation.

### **Mohave**

Once again, we experienced some turnover in program staff during FY23 which accounts for the slower than normal pace of funds utilization. We were able, however; to hire a local attorney who has experience with dependency cases. This has enhanced the team and the capabilities we have to assist families and the children involved. We have been working with the local judiciary and other partners to develop a more holistic family-based program that we would like to roll out in 2024.

### **Navajo**

The funds will be utilized on the Dependency Alternative Program.

### **Pima**

In addition to our current utilization, Pima County intends to use Title IV-E funds to pay for a portion of the cost of a new cloud-based case management system. The new system will allow secure access to case files from any location with internet access and will provide a portal for our contract attorneys to submit billings.

### **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**

The team is in the process of planning the conference again in the spring due to the success of the previous conference. The funds will be utilized for said purpose.

### **Yavapai**

We will continue to fund the above and are hoping that the county's Board of Supervisors will approve a social worker position to assist dependency attorneys.

### **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. The new Dependency Alternative Program has also launched in Yuma County. We will again meet with the attorneys and court staff to see if the funds can be further used to benefit Yuma County and the children in need.