

**Caseload Report for County Legal Operations: Child Welfare Cases
Office of Chief Counsel**

3rd Quarter Report, SFY 2017-2018

Introduction

The Office of Chief Counsel's County Legal Operations section (CLO) represents the Arkansas Department of Human Services ("the Department") in child welfare and adult protective services cases and appeals from such cases. CLO also represents the Department in administrative hearings involving the placement of individuals on the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and the Arkansas Adult Maltreatment Central Registry where the individual challenges the Department's true finding of maltreatment and is represented by an attorney, as well as appeals of administrative hearings to circuit courts and appellate courts.

As part of CLO's representation in child welfare cases, CLO attorneys represent the Department in dependency-neglect cases held before circuit courts across the state. CLO attorneys also provide legal services related to family-in-need-of-services cases where a circuit court orders a juvenile into the custody of the Department or otherwise orders the Department to provide services. The numbers presented in this section include dependency-neglect and family-in-need-of-services cases in which a CLO attorney is involved.

Number of Pending Child Welfare Cases

During the 3rd quarter of state fiscal year 2017-2018 (SFY18), the number of child welfare cases decreased from 3,356 to 3,229. This represents a net loss of 127 cases, or 3.78%. The loss corresponds to 472 cases opened, 601 cases closed, and a correction of 38 cases that were confirmed as closed, but not reflected in previous closed-case reports.

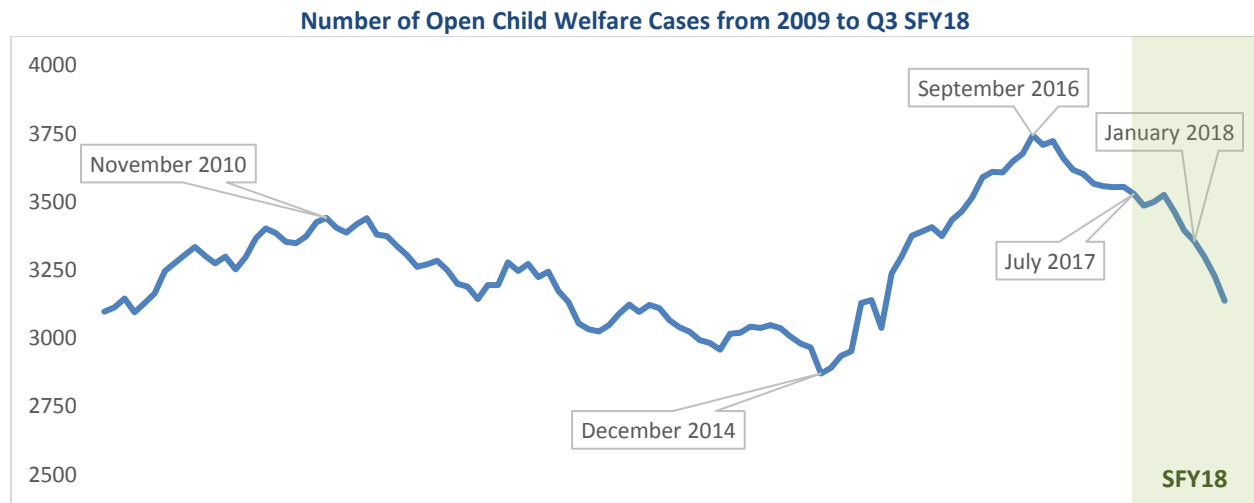


Figure 2.

Since January 2009, the number of child welfare cases has increased from 3,098 at the end of January 2009 to 3,229 at the end of March 2018, which represents a net gain of 131 cases, or 4.23%. During the same period, the average number of child welfare cases was approximately 3,276. By comparison, the average number of child welfare cases open during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 was approximately 3,295.

N.B. OCC does not have a comprehensive case management or reporting system. Consequently, OCC began an audit program in August 2016 to hand count each caseload at least once per year to ensure the accuracy of the reported caseload numbers and the consistency of those numbers month-to-month. Since August 2016, the audit reduced the number of reported cases by a net of 229 cases, which explains *Figure 2's* bend in the number of child welfare cases during SFY18 to date relative to the number of cases opened and closed illustrated in *Figure 3* below.

Number of Opened and Closed Child Welfare Cases Per Month

As of the end of the 3rd quarter of SFY18, the number of cases opened per month averaged 157.33 and the number of cases closed per month averaged 200.33. The 3rd quarter, therefore, had a net average closure of approximately 43.00 cases per month with the number of cases opened ranging from 147 to 176 cases per month and the number of cases closed ranging from 193 to 207 cases per month.

The average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 was substantially lower than the average number of cases opened from January 2009 to March 2018, but the average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 was substantially higher than the average number of cases closed from January 2009 to March 2018.

Specifically, the average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (157.33) was 12.64% lower than the average number of cases opened from January 2009 to March 2018 (180.09). The average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (200.33) was 13.03% higher than the average number of cases closed from January 2009 to March 2018 (177.23).

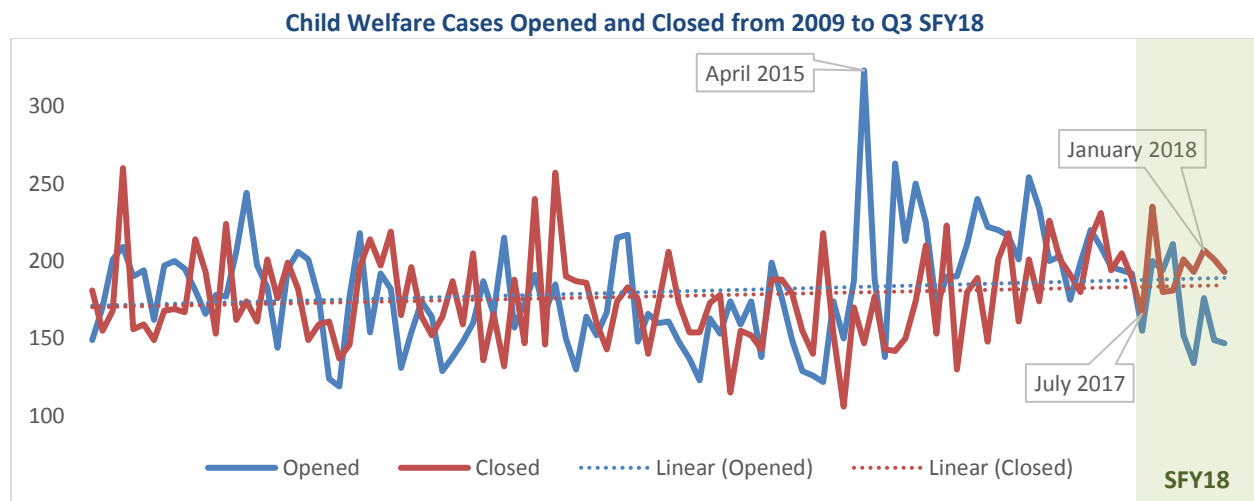


Figure 3

Although the available data do not yet support any conclusions to explain the changes in the number of opened and closed cases from January 2009 to March 2018, the data is helpful in describing the nature of the changes in the number of child welfare cases that have occurred over time.

For example, the average numbers of opened and closed cases during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 are particularly helpful when compared to the averages during two specific preceding periods: (1) the period from December 2014 to September 2016 during which CLO experienced 21 months of nearly uninterrupted growth in the total number of child welfare cases (“the sustained-growth period”), and (2) the period from October 2016 to June 2017 during which CLO experienced 9 months of nearly uninterrupted decline in the total number of child welfare cases (“the sustained-decrease period”).

N.B. The decline that started during the sustained-decrease period continued through the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters of SFY18 as well, which constitutes now 18 months of nearly uninterrupted decline in the total number of child welfare cases.



Comparing the Sustained-growth and Sustained-decline Periods to the 3rd Quarter of SFY18.

The average number of cases opened and closed from December 2014 to September 2016 was substantially higher than the average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 and substantially lower than the average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18. Specifically, the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 (208.23) was 32.35% higher than the average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (157.33). Likewise, the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016 (171.27) was 14.51% lower than the average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (200.33).

The average number of cases opened and closed from October 2016 to June 2017 was also substantially higher than the average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 and slightly higher than the average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18. Specifically, the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 (198.67) was 26.28% higher than the average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (157.33). Likewise, the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 (203.56) was 1.61% higher than the average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (200.33).



Comparing the Sustained-decline Period to the Sustained-growth Period.

The average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 was lower than the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 while the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 was substantially higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016. Specifically, the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 (198.67) was 4.59% lower than the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 (208.23). By contrast, the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 (203.56) was 18.85% higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016 (171.27).



Comparing the 3rd Quarter of SFY18 to the Sustained-growth and Sustained-decline Periods.

The average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 was substantially lower than the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 and the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016. Specifically, the average number of cases opened during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (157.33) was 20.81% lower than the average number of cases opened from October 2016 to June 2017 (198.67) and 24.44% lower than the average number of cases opened from December 2014 to September 2016 (208.23).

The average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 was slightly lower than the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017, but substantially higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016. Specifically, the average number of cases closed during the 3rd quarter of SFY18 (200.33) was 1.59% lower than the average number of cases closed from October 2016 to June 2017 (203.56) and 16.97% higher than the average number of cases closed from December 2014 to September 2016 (171.27).

Child Welfare Cases: January 2018, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	12	0	3	1	10	1	0	0	0	0	2
Ashley	10	17	0	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	39	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Benton	19W	101	10	6	10	65	7	0	2	0	2	1
Boone	14	55	3	1	4	31	1	0	1	0	0	1
Bradley	10	8	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	18	0	1	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	1
Chicot	10	17	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clark	9E	16	1	1	2	6	0	0	1	0	0	0
Clay	2	18	0	2	1	8	2	0	1	0	1	0
Cleburne	16	30	5	4	3	23	3	0	2	0	1	1
Cleveland	13	5	0	3	1	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	27	0	2	2	15	1	0	2	0	1	1
Conway	15	48	0	3	3	24	3	0	1	0	0	0
Craighead	2	92	5	13	7	46	2	0	5	0	0	0
Crawford	21	88	3	6	8	46	1	0	1	0	0	6
Crittenden	2	62	3	0	2	29	4	0	2	0	0	1
Cross	1	29	3	2	1	15	2	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	13	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desha	10	11	0	4	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drew	10	26	0	1	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	98	4	2	4	43	14	0	1	0	1	0
Franklin	5	24	0	3	2	10	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fulton	16	33	0	5	1	12	1	0	0	0	1	0
Garland	18E	82	3	6	6	34	3	0	1	0	1	5
Grant	7	17	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Green	2	106	8	9	5	44	8	0	3	0	4	0
Hempstead	8N	11	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	41	2	2	3	13	5	0	1	0	0	0
Howard	9W	7	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	58	3	10	2	25	3	0	1	0	1	4
Izard	16	32	6	1	1	10	6	0	0	0	0	1
Jackson	3	47	1	5	4	24	2	0	1	0	1	0
Jefferson	11W	73	3	0	4	17	2	0	0	0	0	0
Johnson	5	27	1	0	5	12	1	0	1	0	0	0
Lafayette	8S	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	27	3	4	3	22	5	0	0	0	1	0
Lee	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	6	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	16	0	1	3	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	59	1	2	3	19	0	0	1	0	1	1
Lonoke	23	89	4	4	5	32	7	0	0	0	1	0
Madison	4	35	0	0	2	10	1	0	4	0	1	0
Marion	14	10	1	0	1	8	0	0	1	0	0	0
Miller	8S	70	2	7	3	30	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	2	52	4	0	2	16	1	0	0	0	1	0
Monroe	1	10	1	1	1	11	3	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	7	1	1	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	6	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ouachita	13	24	3	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	1
Perry	6	9	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	35	1	2	3	23	3	0	0	0	0	0
Pike	9W	13	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	70	5	5	2	31	7	0	5	0	0	0
Polk	18W	24	0	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	1	0
Pope	5	31	1	5	3	20	0	0	1	0	0	0
Prairie	17	6	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	313	18	17	31	119	15	1	6	0	10	3
Randolph	3	27	6	2	3	10	0	0	0	0	0	1
Saline	22	46	5	6	5	24	5	0	0	0	1	0
Scott	15	24	1	3	2	12	2	0	0	0	1	2
Searcy	20	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	398	14	17	21	133	14	0	6	0	7	3
Sevier	9W	23	1	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp	3	36	1	2	3	21	3	0	0	0	0	2
St. Francis	1	32	1	1	2	23	3	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	15	3	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	1	0
Union	13	52	3	6	3	21	2	0	0	0	1	1
Van Buren	20	15	2	1	2	9	3	0	1	0	1	0
Washington	4	226	13	8	22	77	14	0	9	1	0	2
White	17	84	4	9	7	40	3	0	2	0	3	0
Woodruff	1	20	3	0	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	39	2	2	3	17	0	0	1	0	1	0
Totals		3,356	176	207	243	1405	173	1	65	1	48	40

Child Welfare Cases: February 2018, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	13	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ashley	10	19	6	4	1	14	1	0	0	0	0	2
Baxter	14	33	0	0	1	12	1	0	0	0	0	1
Benton	19W	104	8	5	5	49	11	0	1	0	3	1
Boone	14	52	1	5	5	24	0	0	0	0	1	3
Bradley	10	7	0	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	19	2	1	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	1
Chicot	10	14	0	2	1	13	3	0	0	0	0	2
Clark	9E	16	2	2	2	10	3	0	1	0	0	0
Clay	2	17	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleburne	16	29	2	2	2	16	2	0	1	0	1	1
Cleveland	13	7	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	24	0	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Conway	15	50	3	2	3	18	2	0	3	0	1	0
Craighead	2	91	5	6	3	41	5	0	4	0	1	1
Crawford	21	88	3	3	4	36	3	0	1	0	0	3
Crittenden	2	60	3	6	1	19	4	0	0	0	0	1
Cross	1	27	3	5	1	13	2	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	13	7	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	1
Desha	10	7	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drew	10	26	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	97	6	7	4	39	6	0	3	0	0	0
Franklin	5	20	0	4	4	10	0	0	1	0	1	1
Fulton	16	31	1	3	1	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Garland	18E	84	6	4	6	29	5	0	3	0	3	1
Grant	7	17	2	2	1	10	0	0	1	0	1	0
Green	2	104	9	11	1	10	4	0	0	0	0	0
Hempstead	8N	11	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	41	2	2	3	25	2	0	1	0	1	0
Howard	9W	7	0	0	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	57	0	1	3	28	3	0	1	0	1	0
Izard	16	30	0	2	1	10	6	0	0	0	0	2
Jackson	3	48	5	4	2	18	4	0	1	0	2	0
Jefferson	11W	70	2	5	5	31	2	0	0	0	0	3
Johnson	5	28	1	0	2	11	1	0	1	1	0	0
Lafayette	8S	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	29	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lee	1	7	2	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	5	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Little River	9W	16	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	57	0	2	4	26	2	0	1	0	0	0
Lonoke	23	88	1	2	3	16	2	0	0	0	1	0
Madison	4	37	2	1	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	0
Marion	14	12	2	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	8S	66	3	7	4	24	2	0	0	0	2	0
Mississippi	2	52	3	3	2	22	7	0	0	0	0	0
Monroe	1	11	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	2	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	8	1	0	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	5	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ouachita	13	23	0	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	35	0	0	2	11	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pike	9W	13	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	67	3	6	2	31	6	0	2	0	3	1
Polk	18W	24	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pope	5	31	1	1	3	13	1	0	0	0	0	0
Prairie	17	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	312	9	11	29	108	10	0	7	0	9	3
Randolph	3	28	5	4	2	16	4	0	0	0	0	0
Saline	22	43	2	5	2	18	2	0	0	0	1	2
Scott	15	22	0	2	2	10	1	0	0	0	0	1
Searcy	20	5	1	0	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	382	8	23	24	162	9	0	18	0	12	1
Sevier	9W	21	0	2	3	14	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp	3	32	3	7	4	31	4	0	3	0	0	2
St. Francis	1	28	0	5	2	13	1	0	1	0	0	0
Stone	16	15	1	1	1	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Union	13	53	2	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Van Buren	20	15	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	4	233	16	9	19	67	13	0	2	1	0	0
White	17	84	4	3	6	38	2	0	2	0	1	0
Woodruff	1	20	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	38	0	1	2	11	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals		3,300	149	201	214	1,255	149	0	65	2	47	36

Child Welfare Cases: March 2018, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	14	1	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ashley	10	21	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	33	1	1	4	13	2	0	0	0	0	0
Benton	19W	106	6	4	5	52	3	0	1	0	0	0
Boone	14	43	1	5	3	22	0	0	0	0	1	3
Bradley	10	5	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	4	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	21	4	0	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chicot	10	12	1	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clark	9E	15	0	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Clay	2	15	1	3	1	9	0	0	1	0	0	1
Cleburne	16	27	3	4	3	12	1	0	0	0	0	2
Cleveland	13	7	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	27	3	0	2	10	1	0	0	0	2	0
Conway	15	44	0	6	3	18	1	0	0	0	2	3
Craighead	2	87	2	6	5	44	5	0	3	0	3	2
Crawford	21	81	0	7	3	33	4	0	0	0	4	3
Crittenden	2	62	4	2	1	13	4	0	0	0	0	1
Cross	1	26	0	1	2	13	1	0	1	0	0	0
Dallas	13	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desha	10	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drew	10	24	0	2	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	91	4	10	4	37	3	0	2	0	2	0
Franklin	5	22	2	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fulton	16	27	1	5	1	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Garland	18E	79	3	8	6	28	4	0	1	0	2	4
Grant	7	18	1	0	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Green	2	102	6	9	5	61	7	0	1	0	3	0
Hempstead	8N	11	1	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	40	1	2	3	13	3	0	0	0	0	0
Howard	9W	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	48	3	7	3	13	2	0	1	0	1	0
Izard	16	29	0	1	1	11	2	0	2	0	1	0
Jackson	3	48	0	0	2	16	2	0	2	0	0	0
Jefferson	11W	67	3	1	4	20	0	0	1	0	0	1
Johnson	5	30	2	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lafayette	8S	6	0	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lawrence	3	26	0	3	1	10	4	0	0	0	3	0
Lee	1	6	0	1	1	6	2	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	15	2	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	50	0	6	5	27	0	0	2	0	0	6
Lonoke	23	93	9	2	3	28	3	0	1	0	0	0
Madison	4	34	0	1	1	5	1	0	1	0	0	0
Marion	14	13	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	8S	58	3	11	5	18	0	0	0	0	2	0
Mississippi	2	54	6	1	2	19	4	0	1	0	0	0
Monroe	1	10	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	8	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ouachita	13	20	1	4	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	9	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	35	2	2	4	22	0	0	0	0	2	0
Pike	9W	12	0	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	69	3	5	1	15	2	0	0	0	0	2
Polk	18W	24	2	2	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pope	5	36	5	0	4	11	0	0	2	0	0	0
Prairie	17	4	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	309	7	10	23	78	7	0	3	0	6	3
Randolph	3	28	0	0	2	14	5	0	0	0	0	0
Saline	22	39	1	5	3	22	6	0	1	0	4	0
Scott	15	22	1	1	2	10	1	0	2	0	2	0
Searcy	20	5	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	378	11	17	31	128	11	0	13	0	10	5
Sevier	9W	24	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp	3	39	7	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Francis	1	26	0	2	3	7	0	0	0	0	1	0
Stone	16	18	3	0	5	15	2	0	0	0	0	1
Union	13	51	1	3	2	23	1	0	3	0	1	0
Van Buren	20	12	0	3	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	0
Washington	4	235	13	7	18	50	17	0	5	1	3	1
White	17	85	6	5	8	44	5	0	1	0	1	0
Woodruff	1	22	3	1	1	12	3	0	1	0	1	0
Yell	15	37	1	2	3	18	2	0	2	0	1	1
Totals		3,229	147	193	230	1,166	130	0	57	1	61	41