

# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **DHS Attorney with Nearly a Decade of Child Welfare Experience Tapped as Interim DCFS Director**



A Department of Human Services (DHS) attorney with nearly a decade of experience handling child welfare cases in Arkansas will serve as the interim director of the DHS Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) while the agency searches for a permanent director.

Mischa Martin will step in as interim director April 1, but will begin working with outgoing Director Cecile Blucker now to ensure a smooth transition in leadership.

“Mischa has an extensive background in both child welfare and as a team leader, and I’m confident she will be an asset to the Division of Children and Family Services during this transition,” said Cindy Gillespie, who was chosen by Governor Asa Hutchinson to be DHS Director. “Not only does she have a strong relationship with many people in the child welfare system, but she also has a passion for

working with our most vulnerable children.”

Blucker announced earlier this year that she planned to step down from her position as DCFS director at the end of March, after more than seven years at the helm.

“Cecile has been a champion of children and put many important changes in place to help strengthen families,” Gillespie said. “We all appreciate her service to the children of Arkansas.”

In her search for a permanent replacement for Blucker, Gillespie said she is looking for someone who can build upon the reforms the agency has started with the goals of ending the generational cycles of abuse, reducing the number of children in the foster care system and finding ways to keep and retain talented workers.

Martin, an Arkansas native, received her Bachelors of Arts in Political Science, her Juris Doctorate and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2004, 2007 and 2008, respectively. She came to work as a child welfare and adult protective services attorney at DHS in 2008, was tapped as assistant deputy counsel in 2013 and an attorney supervisor in 2014 in the Department’s Office of Chief Counsel (OCC).

In 2015, Martin was named OCC’s deputy counsel of county legal operations, managing more than 80 employees across the state. Also in 2015, she stepped into the role of Assistant Director of the Compliance and

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Monitoring section of the Department's Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. There she manages the division's Quality Assurance, Licensure, Policy, and Information Technology sections and has oversight of the state's five Human Development Centers.