

# **Caseload Exits at The Local Level:**

## **The First Year of FIP**

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## **Executive Summary**

Maryland's nickname, *America in Miniature*, speaks to the great economic, geographic and cultural diversity contained within its borders. In many cases the high level of diversity means that the state-level statistical picture on any given variable (e.g., unemployment rate) does not accurately reflect each local jurisdiction.

In the area of public welfare programs, the shift from a standard *one size fits all* state-level model to locality-specific design and management has further compounded the problem of state-level data masking important local variations. Paradoxically, while the Family Investment Program (FIP) allows local directors greater flexibility in administering their Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) programs it also creates a greater need for them to have jurisdictional-level data on the progress of welfare reform.

The present report on local caseload exiting patterns during the first year of FIP implementation is the first in a series by the University of Maryland School of Social Work attempting to provide jurisdictional-level data on the progress of welfare reform. While this report does not provide all the information local directors likely need or desire, it does provide some data that may assist them in their planning efforts by describing the patterns and characteristics of the universe of TCA cases ( $n = 41,212$ ) which closed during the first full year of FIP across Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Collectively, the presentation of information from all jurisdictions will provide local program managers with a picture of what is happening in their jurisdiction and a context in which to interpret their own situations. Briefly, the present report addresses two broad questions:

*1) What are the general jurisdictional trends in TCA cases which closed in Maryland during the first year of FIP?*

*2) What client characteristics are prevalent among customers leaving the TCA caseload in the first year of FIP? What do the administrative data suggest about why these families left TCA?*

To answer these questions, we examined monthly administrative data on closing cases throughout Maryland's 24 jurisdictions in the first year of reform. During the first 12 months of FIP operation (October 1996-September 1997) 41,212 unique cases exited from TCA. A unique closing or exiting case is defined as any assistance unit that exited TCA at least once in the first year of FIP. Aggregate information about closing cases and client characteristics across the jurisdictions were obtained from two administrative data systems: (1) Automated Information Management System (AIMS)/ Automated Master File (AMF) and (2) Client Information System (CIS)/ Client Automated Resource and Eligibility System (CARES). In addition to providing the raw number of exiting cases throughout the state, these systems provide valuable information on the characteristics of exiting cases including: assistance unit size, case composition, TCA experience, and administrative reasons for case closure.

In sum, what do the administrative data tell us about the universe of cases which closed during the first year of FIP? The following points summarize our findings in terms of patterns over time.

Statewide, the number of cases closed is highest in the first two months of FIP operation, October (n = 3,864 or 9.4%) and November (n = 4,093 or 9.9%) 1996. In the following three months (December 1996 to February 1997) the number of exiting cases declined fairly steadily. Exits began to rise in March, peaking in April (9.0% or n = 3,727), declining again over the remaining five months, reaching a low for the entire year in September 1997 (7.3% or n = 2,992).

Twelve jurisdictions (Allegany, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Kent, Montgomery, Talbot & Washington) have their greatest number of caseload exits in the first quarter of FIP, October 1996 to December 1996. Two jurisdictions (Anne Arundel & Howard) have their greatest number of caseload exits in the second quarter of FIP, January 1997 to March 1997. Eight jurisdictions (Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Harford, St. Mary s, Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester) record their greatest number of closings in the third quarter, April 1997 to June 1997. Somewhat different from other jurisdictions, Prince George s County exhibits the highest number of exits in the fourth quarter of FIP (July 1997 to September 1997). Queen Anne s County has two peak exit quarters, both the second and fourth quarters.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In both the second and fourth quarters of FIP, 47 unique TCA cases left the rolls.

Consistent with their caseload sizes, the majority of exiting cases throughout the state occur in Baltimore City (n = 13,840), Prince George s (n = 7,002), Baltimore (n = 4,991), Montgomery (n = 2,721 ) and Anne Arundel (n = 1,948) Counties.

Although all have recorded a relatively sizable number of closing cases, comparing jurisdictions using simple numbers of monthly closing cases does not take into account the wide variability among localities in caseload size. To contrast local Departments while considering overall caseload size differences, we examined each jurisdiction s share of total closing cases versus its share of the state s cash assistance caseload:

In general, each of the 24 local Departments share of overall exiting cases is in line with its share of the overall TCA caseload. However, there are a few exceptions: Baltimore County s share of exiting cases (12.1%) is notably higher than its share of the total state s caseload (8.9%), exhibiting a 3.2% difference.

Similarly, Montgomery and Washington Counties shares of closings cases (6.6%; 2.6%) are higher than their shares of the total state caseload (4.6%;1.2%), differing in a positive direction by 2.0% and 1.4%, respectively. In contrast, and unique among the 24 jurisdictions, Baltimore City s share of overall closing cases (33.6%) is much lower than its share of the overall state caseload (50.7%).

Going beyond the simple numbers of closing cases, what do the administrative data reveal about the characteristics of families leaving TCA during the first year of FIP operation? Overall, jurisdictions are quite similar in terms of the characteristics of their exiting families. Notable findings about the universe of closing cases include:

Households leaving TCA typically contain one adult and one or two children.

Statewide, about two-fifths (42%) of exiting cases are two person assistance units; another one-fourth (27%) are three person assistance units.

Child-only cases comprise a significant portion of the exiting population, accounting for 15% of the closing cases statewide.<sup>2</sup> Local rates of child-only exiting cases vary somewhat from a low of 8% of cases in Garrett and 9% of cases in Queen Anne's Counties to a high of 19% of cases in Baltimore City and 21% of cases in Anne Arundel County.

At the time of exit, almost half (46%) of the state's TCA cases had been receiving assistance for one year or less. Specifically, in 23 of 24 jurisdictions, close to or more than half (43% to 70%) of all exiting cases had an exiting spell of 12 months or less. Customers having spell lengths of more than five years were relatively uncommon throughout the jurisdictions, ranging from 2% of cases in Kent County to 18% of cases in Baltimore City.

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<sup>2</sup>Child-only cases are those in which an adult is not included in the calculation of the TCA grant.

Statewide, the most common reasons recorded in the administrative data for case closure are customer failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process (19.9%) and customer income above limit (18.1%).<sup>3</sup>

In 21 of 24 jurisdictions, income-related closures are the top reasons for case closure. Specifically, in 20 of these 21 jurisdictions, the single most common reason for case closure is the assistance unit's income surpassing the TCA eligibility threshold.<sup>4</sup> In Baltimore City the most frequent reason for case closure is the recipient's start of work (26.9%).<sup>5</sup> In the remaining three jurisdictions, (Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties), the top reason for closure is failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process.

Statewide, full-family sanctions for non-compliance with work or child support requirements are rare in the first year of FIP, accounting for 5.5% (n=2226) and

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<sup>3</sup>Many of these latter cases are, in fact, cases which left welfare for work.

<sup>4</sup>These data should not be interpreted to mean that work-related closures did not occur in these jurisdictions. In CARES, there is not a case closing code directly comparable to the AIMS code recipient started work. From an analysis of the case narratives, it appears that the majority of cases assigned a close code of income above eligibility limit were cases in which the customer became employed.

<sup>5</sup>The city remained on the AIMS system throughout the entire first year of FIP. AIMS includes the closing code recipient started work. Thus, our findings do not mean that proportionately more City than county cases left TCA for work. When we examine the data for Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Prince George's Counties while they were still on AIMS, for example, we find that recipient started work is the second most common closing code after did not complete redetermination.

0.6% (n=257) of all exiting cases, respectively. However, some jurisdictions report higher rates of sanctioning than others.

Localities with the highest percentages of full family work-related sanctions are Somerset (18.7%), Charles (17.1%) and Calvert (15.9%) Counties. Jurisdictions with the lowest percentages of work sanctions are Montgomery County (0.7%), Baltimore City (1.9%), and Wicomico County (2.4%).

Jurisdictions with the highest percentage of child support sanctions are Queen Anne's (3.0%), Carroll (2.4%), and St. Mary's (2.3%) Counties. Four counties (Allegany, Caroline, Frederick, and Garrett) did not record any exits because of non-compliance with child support requirements.

In sum, these data illustrate that there are times when the statewide picture does not accurately reflect local variability. As state and local program managers assess what they have accomplished during the first year of FIP and plan for the months to come, we hope these data provide some useful information on conditions in and among the 24 jurisdictions. Will these closing trends stand the test of time? For several reasons, we believe the answer is no. First, for a number of jurisdictions the size of their remaining TCA caseload is quite small. As the size of the caseload declines, localities will not be able to maintain the same rates of monthly exits.

Second, and perhaps more important, those cases remaining on the rolls will be more difficult to serve. Local agencies may find that the families they are working with

have more barriers to self-sufficiency than those who were able to transition off TCA during the first year of FIP.

Third, there is the reality that -- at the very time local Departments have to work with the more troubled families remaining in the caseload -- they must also make concerted efforts to provide job retention services to former TCA recipients and meet increased federal work participation requirements.

These realities, coupled with the Year One findings documented in this report and our *Life After Welfare* series<sup>6</sup>, confirm the state's wisdom in setting aside dedicated purpose funds specifically to assist local Departments in meeting the more difficult out-year challenges in welfare reform. The first-year challenges associated with the implementation of welfare reform were not simple ones, but the challenges confronting us as we move into subsequent years are even more complex.

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<sup>6</sup>See *Life After Welfare: An Interim Report* (September, 1997) and *Life After Welfare: Second Interim Report* (March, 1998), University of Maryland School of Social Work.

## **Introduction**

With the first year of Family Investment Program (FIP) implementation successfully accomplished, local directors are assessing their progress and determining where to best direct their energies and resources in the months to come. Jurisdictional level data on the progress of welfare reform will likely aid directors in their continuing efforts to develop and implement their programs.

As part of its longstanding partnership with the Department of Human Resources, the University of Maryland School of Social Work is conducting a long-term study of what happens to families leaving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). An early report from this study was released in September 1997 and another was issued just last month. While these early reports provide local directors with a picture of what is happening on a state-wide basis, they do not discuss the sometimes large differences among jurisdictions in terms of TCA caseload, local economy, local policy, etc. Later reports from the study of families leaving TCA will provide jurisdictional level reports for the largest jurisdictions such as Baltimore City and Prince George's County, as well as regional reports for the balance of the state.

However, because of federal reform provisions such as increased participation requirements and the imposition of time limits on adults' receipt of TCA, it is imperative that local agencies have at least some information about their jurisdictions as soon as possible. Thus, while not providing all the information local directors likely need or desire, the present report attempts to assist them in their planning efforts by describing the patterns and characteristics of the universe of TCA cases ( $n = 41,212$ ) which closed during the first full year of FIP implementation across Maryland's 24 jurisdictions.

Collectively, the presentation of information from all jurisdictions will provide local program managers with a picture of what is happening in their jurisdiction and a context in which to interpret their own situations.

## Methodology

The overarching questions of this report are two, but embedded in them are several important subsidiary issues and questions:

*1) What are the general trends in TCA cases which closed in Maryland during the first year of FIP?*

Is there a consistent increase/decrease in the number of cases leaving cash assistance over time?

Is the number of closing cases in each jurisdiction commensurate with the size of the caseload in each jurisdiction?

*2) What client characteristics are prevalent among recipients leaving the TCA caseload in the first year of FIP?*

What is the general composition (e.g., assistance unit size, child-only cases) of closed cases?

What are the most common reasons for TCA case closure?

Typically, what is the most recent spell length (i.e., length of time receiving benefits) among individuals exiting the caseload in the first year of FIP?

To answer the questions listed above, we have examined monthly administrative data on closing cases throughout Maryland's 24 jurisdictions in the first year of reform. In the first year of FIP operation (October 1996 to September 1997) there were 41,212 TCA cases which closed or exited welfare at least once during the twelve month period. The findings in this report describe the characteristics of clients leaving welfare in the first twelve months of FIP; however, with PRWORA's new focus on time limits and work

requirements, it is likely that the type of clients leaving Maryland's welfare caseload in the first year of FIP will differ from those leaving in later years. To address this issue, we will continue to monitor and assess the number and characteristics of monthly exiting cases in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions.

Aggregate information about closing cases and client characteristics across the jurisdictions were obtained from two administrative data systems: (1) Automated Information Management System (AIMS)/Automated Master File (AMF); (2) Client Information System (CIS)/Client Automated Resource and Eligibility System (CARES). AIMS/AMF and CIS/CARES contain records of clients' utilization of public assistance programs under the purview of the Maryland Department of Human Resources. These administrative data systems offer valuable insight into the population exiting cash assistance programs. In addition to providing the raw number of closing cases throughout the state, specific examples of the information obtained from these systems include:

Assistance Unit Size- the number of individuals listed on the grant  
Case Composition- the number of adults and children in each exiting case  
TCA Experience- length of exiting spell  
Reason for Case Closure- the administrative reason for TCA exit

## **Findings**

The following results are based on the universe of closing cases (n=41,212) in Maryland during the first year of FIP (October 1996 - September 1997). The universe includes assistance units that exited TCA at least once in the first year of FIP. In addition to examining closed cases at the state level, we group and analyze cases at the jurisdictional level. Findings for the state and each of the 24 jurisdictions are presented in the following sections:

Maryland Closing Cases

Jurisdictional Closing Cases

Jurisdictional Closing Cases Relative to Caseload Size

Client Characteristics

Administrative Reasons for Case Closure

### **Maryland Closing Cases**

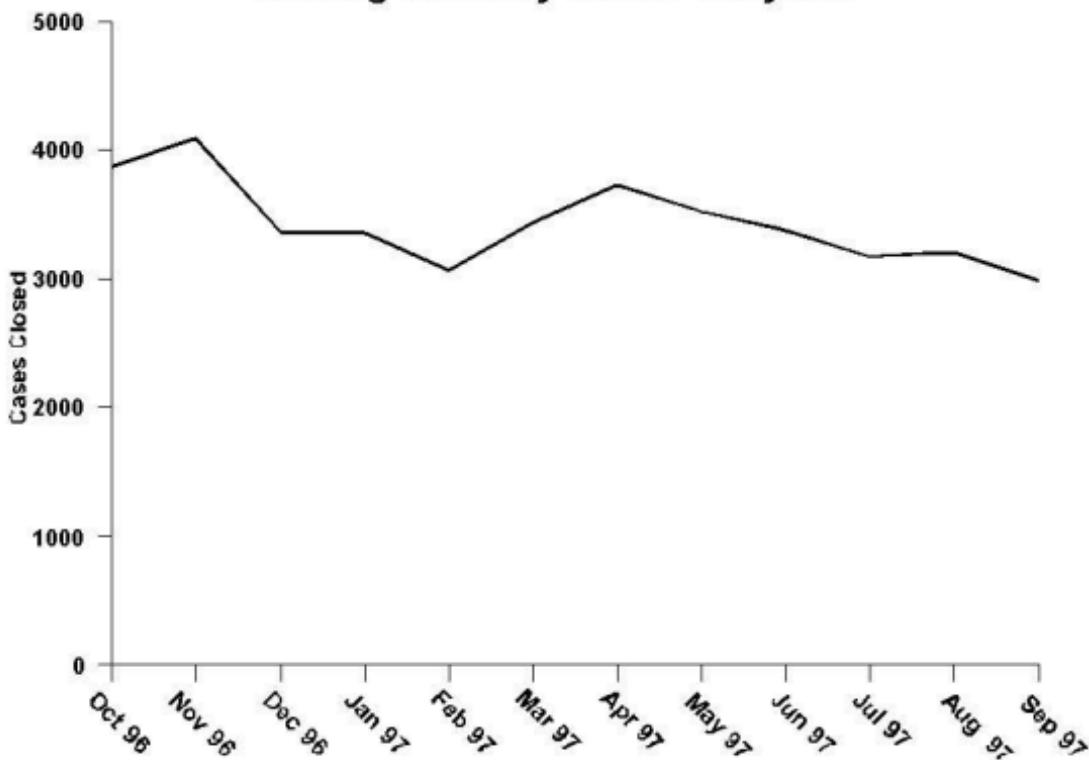
Table 1 and Figure 1, following, present the number of monthly exiting cases for the state over the twelve month study period. The table and graph show that exits are highest in the first two months of FIP operation, October (9.4% or n=3,864) and November (9.9% or n=4,093). Over the next three months, the number of cases leaving TCA declines, bottoming out in February 1997 (7.4% or n= 3,069). In the next two months, case exits begin to rise slightly, hitting a peak in April 1997 (9.0% or n= 3,727). In the last five months studied, the number of cases exiting welfare generally declines, hitting a low for the entire year in September 1997 (7.3% or n= 2,992). In sum, the largest number of cases left welfare in the first two months of the program s

first year and the smallest number left in the last month of the first year. Table 1 presents the statewide data on exiting cases for each of the twelve months.

**Table 1.**  
**Number of Monthly TCA Exits: Statewide**

Month	Closing Cases	Percent	Cumulative Percent
October 96	3,864	9.4%	9.4%
November 96	4,093	9.9%	19.3%
December 96	3,371	8.2%	27.5%
January 97	3,357	8.2%	35.7%
February 97	3,069	7.4%	43.1%
March 97	3,435	8.3%	51.4%
April 97	3,727	9.0%	60.4%
May 97	3,531	8.6%	69.0%
June 97	3,383	8.2%	77.2%
July 97	3,173	7.7%	84.9%
August 97	3,217	7.8%	92.7%
September 97	2,992	7.3%	100.0%
<i>Total</i>	41,212	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 1  
**Closing Cases By Month: Maryland**



## **Closing Cases**

Quarterly aggregate caseload exits for the first year of FIP indicate that twelve jurisdictions (Allegany, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Kent, Montgomery, Talbot & Washington) have their greatest number of caseload exits in the first quarter of FIP, October 1996 to December 1996. Two jurisdictions (Anne Arundel & Howard) have their greatest number of caseload exits in the second quarter of FIP, January 1997 to March 1997. Eight jurisdictions (Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Harford, St. Mary's, Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester) record their greatest number of closings in the third quarter, April 1997 to June 1997. Somewhat different from other jurisdictions, Prince George's County exhibits the highest number of exits in the fourth quarter of FIP (July 1997 to September 1997). Queen Anne's County has two peak exit quarters, both the second and fourth quarters.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2, following, shows for each jurisdiction, the number and percent of cases which left TCA during the first twelve months of FIP. See Appendix A, Figures 1-24, which graphically illustrate exits for each jurisdiction in each of FIP's first twelve months.

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<sup>1</sup>In both the second and fourth quarters of FIP, 47 unique TCA cases left the rolls.

**Table 2. Number of Closing Cases by Month and Jurisdiction**

	<u>Allegany</u>	<u>Anne Arundel</u>	<u>Baltimore</u>	<u>Calvert</u>	<u>Caroline</u>
Oct 96	65 (9.8%)	218 (11.2%)	417 (8.4%)	39 (9.8%)	28 (9.8%)
Nov 96	61 (9.2%)	111 (5.7%)	715 (14.3%)	21 (5.3%)	15 (5.3%)
Dec 96	77 (11.7%)	162 (8.3%)	260 (5.2%)	33 (8.3%)	22 (7.7%)
Jan 97	50 (7.6%)	144 (7.4%)	401 (8.0%)	29 (7.3%)	15 (5.3%)
Feb 97	53 (8.0%)	167 (8.6%)	293 (5.9%)	28 (7.0%)	19 (6.7%)
Mar 97	37 (5.6%)	239 (12.3%)	394 (7.9%)	40 (10.1%)	23 (8.1%)
Apr 97	72 (10.9%)	150 (7.7%)	453 (9.1%)	51 (12.8%)	31(10.9%)
May 97	68 (10.3%)	135 (6.9%)	455 (9.1%)	31 (7.7%)	20 (7.0%)
Jun 97	49 (7.4%)	154 (7.9%)	466 (9.3%)	29 (7.3%)	33(11.6%)
Jul 97	38 (5.8%)	181 (9.3%)	403 (8.1%)	40 (10.1%)	30(10.5%)
Aug 97	54 (8.2%)	127 (6.5%)	394 (7.9%)	27 (6.8%)	27 (9.4%)
Sep 97	36 (5.5%)	160 (8.2%)	340 (6.8%)	30 (7.5%)	22 (7.7%)
<i>Total</i>	660	1,948	4,991	398	285
	<u>Carroll</u>	<u>Cecil</u>	<u>Charles</u>	<u>Dorchester</u>	<u>Frederick</u>
Oct 96	44 (9.1%)	67 (9.9%)	81 (9.3%)	55 (11.2%)	105(12.7%)
Nov 96	42 (8.8%)	62 (9.2%)	92 (10.6%)	38 (7.8%)	75 (9.1%)
Dec 96	48 (10.0%)	60 (8.9%)	83 (9.6%)	42 (8.6%)	93(11.2%)
Jan 97	41 (8.5%)	41 (6.1%)	80 (9.2%)	31 (6.3%)	80 (9.7%)
Feb 97	35 (7.3%)	48 (7.1%)	73 (8.4%)	34 (7.0%)	85(10.3%)
Mar 97	42 (8.8%)	59 (8.7%)	79 (9.1%)	34 (7.0%)	97(11.7%)
Apr 97	37 (7.7%)	82 (12.2%)	80 (9.2%)	37 (7.5%)	93(11.2%)
May 97	48 (10.0%)	64 (9.5%)	70 (8.1%)	49 (10.0%)	35 (4.3%)
Jun 97	36 (7.5%)	61 (9.1%)	63 (7.3%)	48 (9.8%)	52 (6.3%)
Jul 97	41 (8.5%)	45 (6.7%)	52 (6.0%)	50 (10.2%)	50 (6.0%)
Aug 97	33 (6.9%)	50 (7.4%)	52 (6.0%)	37 (7.6%)	32 (3.9%)
Sep 97	33 (6.9%)	35 (5.2%)	62 (7.2%)	34 (7.0%)	30 (3.6%)
<i>Total</i>	480	674	867	489	827

	<u>Garrett</u>	<u>Harford</u>	<u>Howard</u>	<u>Kent</u>	<u>Montgomery</u>
Oct 96	36 (17.0%)	100 (9.4%)	68 (8.8%)	23 (16.5%)	239 (8.8%)
Nov 96	19 (9.0%)	90 (8.5%)	61 (7.9%)	22 (15.8%)	237 (8.7%)
Dec 96	17 (8.1%)	93 (8.8%)	69 (8.9%)	13 (9.4%)	295 (10.8%)
Jan 97	19 (9.0%)	85 (8.0%)	81 (10.5%)	12 (8.6%)	208 (7.6%)
Feb 97	18 (8.5%)	72 (6.8%)	73 (9.4%)	9 (6.5%)	237 (8.7%)
Mar 97	12 (5.7%)	105 (9.9%)	89 (11.5%)	10 (7.2%)	183 (6.8%)
Apr 97	17 (8.1%)	107 (10.1%)	73 (9.4%)	14 (10.1%)	289 (10.7%)
May 97	23 (10.9%)	107 (10.1%)	60 (7.8%)	16 (11.5%)	197 (7.2%)
Jun 97	14 (6.6%)	83 (7.8%)	53 (6.8%)	9 (6.5%)	244 (9.0%)
Jul 97	13 (6.2%)	79 (7.5%)	43 (5.6%)	4 (2.9%)	175 (6.4%)
Aug 97	13 (6.2%)	63 (6.0%)	55 (7.1%)	5 (3.6%)	209 (7.7%)
Sep 97	10 (4.7%)	75 (7.1%)	49 (6.3%)	2 (1.4%)	208 (7.6%)
<i>Total</i>	211	1,059	774	139	2,721
	<u>Prince George s</u>	<u>Queen Anne s</u>	<u>St. Mary s</u>	<u>Somerset</u>	<u>Talbot</u>
Oct 96	578 (8.3%)	13 (7.6%)	55 (9.5%)	30 (7.9%)	27(13.0%)
Nov 96	645 (9.2%)	11 (6.5%)	43 (7.4%)	28 (7.3%)	17 (8.2%)
Dec 96	450 (6.4%)	12 (7.1%)	48 (8.3%)	28 (7.3%)	21 (10.2%)
Jan 97	414 (5.9%)	21 (12.4%)	32 (5.5%)	30 (7.9%)	22 (10.6%)
Feb 97	262 (3.7%)	13 (7.6%)	26 (4.5%)	28 (7.3%)	11 (5.3%)
Mar 97	416 (5.9%)	13 (7.6%)	29 (5.0%)	26 (6.8%)	15 (7.3%)
Apr 97	524 (7.5%)	17 (10.0%)	47 (8.1%)	43 (11.3%)	24 (11.6%)
May 97	515 (7.4%)	14 (8.2%)	55 (9.5%)	49 (12.8%)	17 (8.2%)
Jun 97	673 (9.6%)	9 (5.3%)	129 (22.3%)	52 (13.6%)	13 (6.3%)
Jul 97	817 (11.7%)	15 (8.9%)	49 (8.4%)	35 (9.2%)	8 (3.9%)
Aug 97	928 (13.3%)	14 (8.2%)	31 (5.3%)	16 (4.2%)	16 (7.7%)
Sep 97	780 (11.1%)	18 (10.6%)	36 (6.2%)	17 (4.5%)	16 (7.7%)
<i>Total</i>	7,002	170	580	382	207

	<u>Washington</u>	<u>Wicomico</u>	<u>Worcester</u>	<u>Baltimore</u> <u>City</u>	<u>Maryland</u>
Oct 96	125 (11.8%)	114 (10.4%)	37 (10.5%)	1299 (9.4%)	3864 (9.4%)
Nov 96	113 (10.7%)	68 (6.2%)	28 (8.0%)	1479 (10.7%)	4093 (9.9%)
Dec 96	119 (11.2%)	70 (6.4%)	24 (6.8%)	1232 (8.9%)	3371 (8.2%)
Jan 97	81 (7.6%)	85 (7.8%)	32 (9.1%)	1323 (9.5%)	3357 (8.1%)
Feb 97	90 (8.5%)	71 (6.5%)	22 (6.3%)	1302 (9.4%)	3069 (7.5%)
Mar 97	151 (14.2%)	89 (8.1%)	30 (8.6%)	1223 (8.8%)	3435(8.3%)
Apr 97	96 (9.0%)	107 (9.8%)	54 (15.4%)	1229 (8.9%)	3727 (9.0%)
May 97	85 (8.0%)	124 (11.3%)	41 (11.7%)	1253 (9.1%)	3531 (8.6%)
Jun 97	50 (4.7%)	98 (9.0%)	40 (11.4%)	925 (6.7%)	3383 (8.2%)
Jul 97	57 (5.4%)	94 (8.6%)	23 (6.6%)	831 (6.0%)	3173 (7.7%)
Aug 97	48 (4.5%)	88 (8.0%)	10 (2.8%)	888 (6.4%)	3217 (7.8%)
Sep 97	46 (4.4%)	87 (7.9%)	10 (2.8%)	856 (6.2%)	2992 (7.3%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,061</i>	<i>1,095</i>	<i>351</i>	<i>13,840</i>	<i>41,212</i>

## **Jurisdictional Closing Cases Relative to Caseload Size**

The previous table illustrates that all jurisdictions have recorded relatively sizable numbers of exiting cases. However, it is somewhat difficult to compare jurisdictions using simple numbers of monthly closing cases because of the wide variability in overall caseload size. One way to contrast local Departments while taking into account differences in overall caseload size is to consider each jurisdiction's share of total closing cases relative to its share of the state's cash assistance caseload.

Table 3, following, presents each jurisdiction's portion of the state's total exiting cases in comparison with its portion of the state's total caseload for the first year of FIP<sup>2</sup>. Consistent with their caseload sizes, the majority of closing cases throughout the state occur in Baltimore City (33.6% or n=13,840), Prince George's (17.0% or n=7,002), Baltimore (12.1% or n=4,991), Montgomery (6.6% or n=2,721) and Anne Arundel (4.7% or n=1,948) Counties. In general, each of the 24 local Departments' share of overall closing cases is in line with its share of the overall TCA caseload. However, there are a few exceptions; Baltimore County's share of closing cases (12.1%) is notably higher than its share of the total state's caseload (8.9%), exhibiting a 3.2% difference. Similarly, Montgomery and Washington Counties' shares of all closing cases (6.6%; 2.6%) are higher than their shares of the total state caseload (4.6%; 1.2%), differing in a positive direction by 2.0% and 1.4%, respectively. In contrast, and unique among the

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<sup>2</sup>Data on total caseload were calculated from the Department of Human Resources, Family Investment Administration *Monthly Statistical Reports* for October 1996 through September 1997.

24 jurisdictions, Baltimore City's share of overall exiting cases (33.6%) is much lower than its share of the overall state caseload (50.7%).

**Table 3.**  
**Percent of Total Closings/Caseload by Jurisdiction:10/96 - 9/97**

Jurisdiction	Percent of Total Closings	Percent of Total Caseload	Difference
Baltimore County	12.1%	8.9%	3.2%
Montgomery	6.6%	4.6%	2.0%
Washington	2.6%	1.2%	1.4%
Prince Georges	17.0%	15.9%	1.1%
Frederick	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Wicomico	2.7%	1.8%	0.9%
Harford	2.6%	1.7%	0.9%
Howard	1.9%	1.0%	0.9%
Allegany	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%
Cecil	1.6%	1.0%	0.6%
Anne Arundel	4.7%	4.2%	0.5%
Charles	2.1%	1.6%	0.5%
Carroll	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%
Dorchester	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%
St. Marys	1.4%	1.0%	0.4%
Calvert	1.0%	0.6%	0.4%
Somerset	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%
Worcester	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%
Caroline	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%
Garrett	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Talbot	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Kent	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
Queen Anne s	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%
Baltimore City	33.6%	50.7%	-17.1%

## Client Characteristics

Table 4, following this discussion, presents descriptive information on the characteristics of families leaving TCA across the 24 jurisdictions and for the state as a whole in the first year of FIP. Five characteristics descriptive of their TCA cases are discussed: spell length, assistance unit size, number of adults, number of children, child-only cases.

### Spell Length<sup>3</sup>

At the state level, almost one half or 46% of all exiting cases have a spell length of one year or less. Slightly less than one fourth or 23% of the total exiting cases have a spell length lasting 13 to 24 months. Therefore, about seven of every ten cases exiting TCA in the first year of welfare reform had been receiving cash assistance for two years or less; about one in ten or 10% of exiting cases statewide have a spell length of more than five years at the time of case closure. Figure 2, following, illustrates these patterns.

Table 4 indicates that in 23 of 24 jurisdictions, this same pattern prevails. That is, families exiting welfare in the first year of FIP are those for whom the TCA spell resulting in the case closure/exit has been a fairly short one.<sup>4</sup> In fact, for all but the largest jurisdiction (Baltimore City), close to or more than half (43% in Prince George's

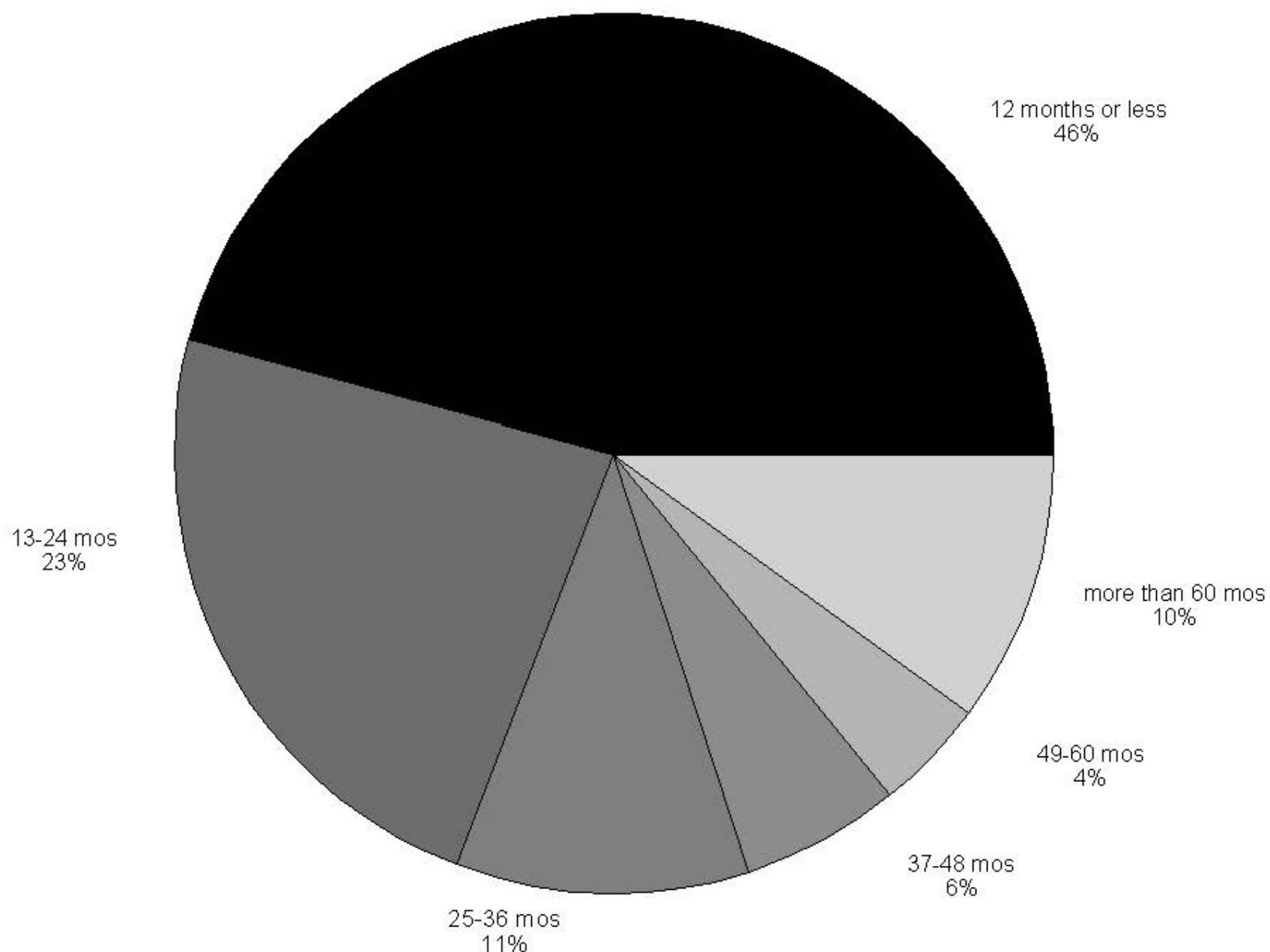
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<sup>3</sup>Specifically in this report, spell length refers to the continuous period of TCA receipt immediately preceding FIP exit.

<sup>4</sup>Local variations in case closing practices no doubt exert some influence on these data.

County to 70% in Dorchester County) of all closing cases have a TCA spell lasting for one year or less. Customers with long spell lengths more than five years are relatively uncommon among clients exiting in the first year. Excluding Baltimore City, the number of exiting cases with a spell length of more than five years ranges from 2% of cases in Kent County to 11% of cases in Allegany County. However, nearly one-fifth or 18% of the exiting cases in Baltimore City have a spell length of more than five years. These findings seem to provide evidence to support the early success of FIP's intent to move short-term, employable recipients off cash assistance in the early years of reform.

**Figure 2**  
**Length of Exiting TCA Spell: Statewide Data**  
**Universe of Closing Cases (n = 41,212)**

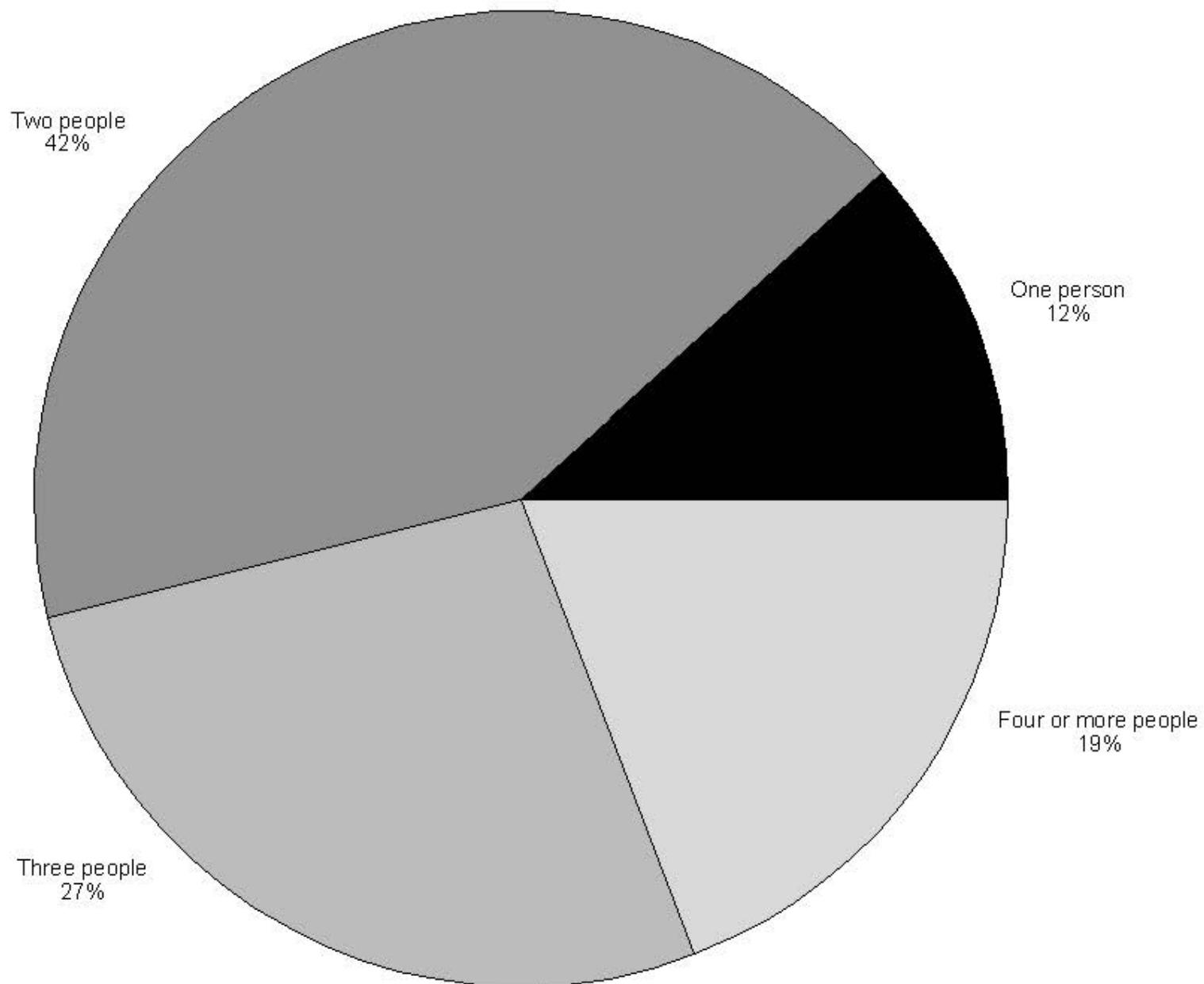


### Assistance Unit Size

The most common situation among TCA exiting cases in Maryland is that of a two person assistance unit, accounting for 42% of the statewide universe of closing cases. The next most common situation is an assistance unit of three persons, representing 27% of the closing cases. About one fifth or 19% of the state's closing cases have assistance units of four or more persons. The statewide distribution of assistance unit size is displayed in Figure 3, following.

In all 24 jurisdictions the typical situation among FIP exiting cases is, likewise, that of a two person assistance unit, ranging from 34% of cases in Calvert and Talbot Counties to 47% of the cases in Queen Anne's County. However, the percentage of exiting cases with an assistance unit size of four or more persons does vary somewhat by jurisdiction. It is lowest in Baltimore and Caroline Counties and Baltimore City (17% in each jurisdiction), and highest in Garrett (27%) and Calvert (28%) Counties. These data, for each jurisdiction, appear in Table 4.

**Figure 3**  
**Size of Assistance Unit: Statewide Data**  
**Universe of Closing Cases (n = 41,212)**



### Number of Adults on the Grant

Statewide, a majority of the closing cases have one adult on the grant, accounting for 82% of all exiting cases in Maryland. Fifteen percent of the closing cases have no adults on the grant; two adults are included in only 3% of closing cases throughout the state.

Across jurisdictions, the majority of exiting cases also include one adult, ranging from 76% of cases in Anne Arundel County to 87% of cases in both Howard and Worcester counties. The percentage of cases with two adults varies from a low of 1% of exiting cases in Baltimore City to a high of 11% of exiting cases in Garrett County.

### Number of Children on the Grant

At the state level, just about half (49%) of the exiting cases contain one child. Three in ten or 30% include two children on the grant, with another 19% having three or more children listed on the grant.

In all 24 jurisdictions one child on the grant is most common, ranging from 41% of cases in Calvert County to 55% of cases in Queen Anne's County. The frequency of cases with two children ranges from a low of 23% of cases in Queen Anne's County to a high of 35% of cases in Dorchester County and 33% of cases in St. Mary's County. The percentage of cases with three or more children on the grant ranges from 16% of closing cases in Baltimore County to 26% of closing cases in Calvert County.

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### Child-Only Cases

Child-only cases (i.e., FIP-assisted cases in which the adult head of household is not included in the calculation of the TCA grant) represent an important segment of the exiting population, comprising 15% of the universe of statewide closing cases.

The percentage of child-only cases varies considerably across the localities. At the low end, 8% of Garrett County's closing cases and 9% of Queen Anne's County's closing cases consist exclusively of children. At the high end, Baltimore City has 19% and Anne Arundel County has 21% of their closing cases consisting of child-only assistance units.

### The Role of Baltimore City

When discussing the characteristics of the statewide universe of exiting cases (n=41,212), one must be aware that Baltimore City comprises a much larger percentage of this universe (almost two times larger) than any other jurisdiction. Thus, when discussing the statewide findings, one must be cognizant that, as such a large jurisdiction, Baltimore City has a major influence on the overall statewide characteristics. In other words, by the City's sheer size alone (compared to every other jurisdiction) its findings tend to dominate the statewide findings and, in so doing, mask realities in the other 23 jurisdictions. To counteract this, in the last column of Table 4 we present findings from the state with Baltimore City removed from the analysis. However, as the table indicates, when Baltimore City is removed from the analysis, the only notable difference pertains to the length of most recent welfare spell. The percent of the state's exiting cases having a spell length of more than five years (10%) drops

slightly (7%) when Baltimore City is excluded from the analysis. This reflects that a sizable proportion of exiting families with a recent welfare spell lasting for more than five years reside in Baltimore City. However, spell length findings may also be influenced by variations in local case closing practices.

**Table 4. Client Characteristics By Jurisdiction - First Year of FIP (October 1996 - September 1997)**

	<u>Allegany</u>	<u>Anne Arundel</u>	<u>Baltimore County</u>	<u>Calvert</u>	<u>Caroline</u>	<u>Carroll</u>
<b>Number of Closing Cases (Unique)</b>	660	1,948	4,991	398	285	480
<b>Length of Ending Spell<sup>5</sup></b>						
12 months or less	51%	48%	55%	64%	51%	66%
13-24 months	17%	23%	23%	17%	21%	17%
25-36 months	10%	12%	9%	7%	15%	6%
37-48 months	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	4%
49-60 months	5%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
more than 60 months	11%	8%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Mean spell length (months)	25.71	22.92	19.38	16.93	20.14	15.96
Median spell length (months)	12.75	13.71	11.83	8.81	12.08	8.25
Range (months)	1-151	1-143	1-145	1-150	1-152	1-146
<b>No. of Adults on the Grant</b>						
0	10%	21%	17%	11%	14%	10%
1	81%	76%	80%	82%	82%	86%
2	9%	3%	3%	7%	4%	4%
<b>No. of Children on the Grant</b>						
0	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%
1	48%	46%	51%	41%	51%	46%
2	31%	31%	31%	32%	28%	28%
3 or more	19%	20%	16%	26%	19%	23%
<b>Child-Only Cases</b>	10%	21%	17%	11%	14%	10%
<b>Size of Assistance Unit</b>						
1	9%	15%	12%	8%	12%	8%
2	41%	39%	44%	34%	43%	41%
3	29%	27%	27%	30%	28%	27%
4 or more	21%	19%	17%	28%	17%	24%
Mean assistance unit size	2.74	2.60	2.57	2.93	2.60	2.76
Median assistance unit size	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00
Range	1-12	1-12	1-12	1-7	1-7	1-8

<sup>5</sup>Readers are cautioned that some jurisdictional differences in length of exiting spell may be explained by differences in case closing practices.

<b>Number of Closing Cases (unique)</b>	<u>Cecil</u> 674	<u>Charles</u> 867	<u>Dorchester</u> 489	<u>Frederick</u> 827	<u>Garrett</u> 211	<u>Harford</u> 1,059	<u>Howard</u> 774
<b>Length of Current Spell</b>							
12 months or less	63%	49%	70%	58%	58%	53%	51%
13-24 months	17%	23%	13%	21%	18%	22%	24%
25-36 months	8%	12%	6%	9%	11%	11%	12%
37-48 months	6%	6%	4%	5%	3%	6%	4%
49-60 months	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
more than 60 months	4%	7%	5%	4%	7%	5%	6%
Mean spell length (months)	16.91	22.79	15.66	17.74	19.79	18.96	20.27
Median spell length (months)	9.34	13.31	7.02	10.03	11.33	12.02	12.94
Range (months)	1-151	1-151	1-151	1-233	1-150	1-151	1-141
<b>No. of Adults on the Grant</b>							
0	12%	11%	10%	13%	8%	11%	10%
1	81%	85%	85%	84%	81%	84%	87%
2	7%	4%	5%	3%	11%	5%	3%
<b>No. of Children on the Grant</b>							
0	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
1	49%	48%	45%	52%	48%	48%	48%
2	27%	28%	35%	29%	26%	28%	29%
3 or more	21%	21%	18%	17%	23%	22%	21%
<b>Child-Only Cases</b>							
	12%	11%	10%	13%	8%	11%	10%
<b>Size of Assistance Unit</b>							
1	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	10%	8%
2	42%	41%	38%	45%	38%	41%	44%
3	24%	26%	33%	27%	26%	27%	28%
4 or more	24%	23%	19%	18%	27%	22%	20%
Mean assistance unit size	2.72	2.76	2.69	2.60	2.87	2.73	2.70
Median assistance unit size	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1-7	1-10	1-8	1-7	1-8	1-8	1-9

<b>Number of Closing Cases (unique)</b>	<u>Kent</u> 139	<u>Montgomery</u> 2,721	<u>Prince Georges</u> 7,002	<u>Anne s</u> 170	<u>Queen</u> 580	<u>St. Mary s</u> 382	<u>Somerset</u> 382	<u>Talbot</u> 207
<b>Length of Current Spell</b>								
12 months or less	67%	47%	43%	55%	50%	51%	65%	
13-24 months	14%	23%	25%	22%	26%	19%	16%	
25-36 months	8%	11%	13%	9%	9%	13%	9%	
37-48 months	7%	6%	7%	6%	7%	7%	4%	
49-60 months	2%	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%	
more than 60 months	2%	9%	8%	5%	6%	6%	3%	
Mean spell length (months)	14.74	23.73	24.59	20.05	20.97	20.79	14.91	
Median spell length (months)	7.56	13.94	15.94	11.76	12.97	12.46	7.14	
Range (months)	1-141	1-145	1-148	1-150	1-149	1-142	1-104	
<b>No. of Adults on the Grant</b>								
0	16%	13%	14%	9%	12%	10%	17%	
1	80%	84%	84%	84%	82%	85%	81%	
2	4%	3%	2%	7%	6%	5%	2%	
<b>No. of Children on the Grant</b>								
0	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	
1	47%	44%	48%	55%	45%	47%	46%	
2	31%	30%	29%	23%	33%	29%	31%	
3 or more	20%	24%	21%	21%	20%	22%	21%	
<b>Child-Only Cases</b>	16%	13%	14%	9%	12%	10%	17%	
<b>Size of Assistance Unit</b>								
1	13%	10%	11%	8%	9%	8%	16%	
2	39%	38%	42%	47%	40%	41%	34%	
3	26%	29%	27%	23%	30%	28%	30%	
4 or more	22%	23%	20%	22%	21%	23%	20%	
Mean assistance unit size	2.66	2.77	2.69	2.66	2.77	2.74	2.64	
Median assistance unit size	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	
Range	1-6	1- 9	1-10	1-6	1-8	1-10	1-8	

<b>Number of Closing Cases</b> (unique)	<u>Washington</u> 1,061	<u>Wicomico</u> 1,095	<u>Worcester</u> 351	<u>Baltimore</u> City 13,840	<u>Maryland</u> with Balt City 41,212	<u>Maryland</u> without Balt City 27,369
<b>Length of Current Spell</b>						
12 months or less	58%	66%	66%	35%	46%	51%
13-24 months	20%	19%	20%	23%	23%	22%
25-36 months	9%	8%	7%	12%	11%	11%
37-48 months	4%	3%	3%	7%	6%	6%
49-60 months	2%	1%	1%	5%	4%	3%
more than 60 months	7%	3%	3%	18%	10%	7%
Mean spell length (months)	18.72	14.30	14.30	35.80	26.12	21.13
Median spell length (months)	9.73	8.06	7.33	19.43	14.40	12.62
Range (months)	1-237	1-151	1-154	1-417	1-417	1-237
<b>No. of Adults on the Grant</b>						
0	11%	11%	11%	19%	15%	14%
1	85%	85%	87%	80%	82%	83%
2	4%	4%	2%	1%	3%	3%
<b>No. of Children on the Grant</b>						
0	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
1	49%	47%	47%	50%	49%	48%
2	30%	31%	28%	29%	30%	30%
3 or more	18%	20%	23%	18%	19%	20%
<b>Child-Only Cases</b>	11%	11%	11%	19%	15%	14%
<b>Size of Assistance Unit</b>						
1	10%	9%	11%	13%	12%	11%
2	42%	42%	39%	44%	42%	42%
3	28%	29%	29%	26%	27%	27%
4 or more	20%	20%	21%	17%	19%	20%
Mean assistance unit size	2.69	2.70	2.72	2.54	2.63	2.68
Median assistance unit size	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1-10	1-7	1-8	1-11	1-12	1-12

## **Administrative Reasons for Case Closure**

Reasons for leaving welfare are as many and varied as the life situations of clients; however, most administrative data systems must attempt to capture the complexity and diversity of these reasons in a set of pre-determined codes. Thus, these codes may not always reflect the complex realities of clients' lives or the reason(s) why customers leave TCA. For example, in our ongoing longitudinal study of a random sample of families leaving TCA, we are examining recorded case closing codes, case narratives, and the state wages/employment database. In our first report on this study<sup>6</sup> we found that although "payee started work" was the administratively-recorded closing reason in only 12.3% of our sample in the first nine months of FIP, official employment data indicated that at least one-third of the payees were working in the quarter in which they left welfare. Moreover, detailed examination of case narratives revealed that perhaps as many as one-fifth of cases closed at the request of the client were actually cases where the payee had started a new job. A sizeable proportion of cases closed because of "over-scale income" also appear to be ones in which the adult recipient secured employment.<sup>7</sup> These caveats notwithstanding, it may still be informative for local directors to examine TCA case closing reasons in their raw form (i.e., expressed as closing codes), during the first 12 months of FIP

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<sup>6</sup>*Life After Welfare: An Interim Report* (September, 1997). Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

<sup>7</sup>Closing Code Analysis: Performance Measures Work Group (January 8, 1998). Memorandum from Catherine Born (University of Maryland, School of Social Work) to Mark Millspaugh and Richard Larson, Family Investment Administration.

implementation. Thus, with the above cautions in mind, the administratively-recorded closing reasons for the universe of exiting cases (n= 41,212) in the state and its 24 jurisdictions are described below.

#### Top Five Closing Reasons: Statewide

Table 5, following this discussion, presents the five most frequent administrative closing reasons for the entire universe of exiting cases in the state and, separately, for each of the 24 jurisdictions. At the state level, the most common reasons for case closure are failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process (n=7,997 or 19.9%) and income above limit (n=7,278 or 18.1%). Failure to give eligibility information (n=5,496 or 13.7%) is the next most frequent reason for case closure. The fourth most common reason for case closure at the state level is the recipient's start of work (n=4,749 or 11.8%); fifth is case closure at the request of the client (n=3,577 or 8.9%). In interpreting these data, one must be aware that the code income above limit was most often used by CARES counties in situations where the TCA customer left welfare for work<sup>8</sup>. This assertion is confirmed by our review of MABS data and analysis of case narratives, as discussed in our two previously-issued *Life After Welfare* reports.

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<sup>8</sup>In CARES, there is not a case closing code directly comparable to the AIMS code recipient started work. From an analysis of the case narratives, it appears that the majority of cases assigned a close code of income above eligibility limit were cases in which the customer became employed.

### Top Five Reasons: Local Level

Failure to apply/complete the redetermination process is the most frequent reason for case closure in three jurisdictions, each of which has a large TCA caseload and relatively large number of exiting cases: Anne Arundel (n=438 of 1,925 or 22.8%), Montgomery (n=786 of 2,540 or 30.9%), and Prince George's (n=2,315 of 6,816 or 34.0%) Counties. In the 21 remaining localities, income-related closures are the top reason for case closure. Specifically, in 20 of these 21 jurisdictions, the most common reason for case closure is the assistance unit's income surpassing the TCA eligibility level; in Baltimore City the most frequent recorded reason for case closure is the recipient's start of work (n=3,723 of 13,840 or 26.9%)<sup>9</sup>. Again, we must note that this latter finding results largely from the differences in CARES and AIMS case closing codes. Thus, these data do not indicate that more City than county cases left welfare for work.

In addition to being the most common closing reason in 20 jurisdictions, income above limit is one of the five most common reasons for case closure in 23 of the 24 jurisdictions, appearing in the top five for all but Baltimore City. The assistance unit's request for case closure appears in the top five reasons in all 24 jurisdictions; failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process appears in the top five reasons for case closure in 19 of 24 jurisdictions. Sanctions for non-compliance with work requirements

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<sup>9</sup>The city remained on the AIMS system throughout the entire first year of FIP. AIMS includes the closing code recipient started work. Thus, our findings do not mean that proportionately more City than county cases left TCA for work. When we examine the data for Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Prince George's Counties while they were still on AIMS, for example, we find that recipient started work is the second most common closing code after did not complete redetermination.

also appear in the top five reasons for case closure in 19 of 24 jurisdictions; however, with the exception of Baltimore County these tend to be smaller jurisdictions.

**Table 5. Top Five Administrative Reasons for Case Closure**

	<b>Top 5 Closing Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Maryland</b>	Failure to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Started Work Assistance Unit Requested Closure	7,997 7,278 5,496 4,749 3,577	19.9% 18.1% 13.7% 11.8% 8.9%
<b>Allegany</b>	Income Above Limit Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Moved	255 142 62 58 29	40.4% 22.5% 9.8% 9.2% 4.6%
<b>Anne Arundel</b>	Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Started Work Assistance Unit Requested Closure Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information	438 283 268 259 129	22.8% 14.7% 13.9% 13.5% 6.7%
<b>Baltimore County</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Work Sanction Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure	1,059 1,039 569 485 353	21.8% 21.4% 11.7% 10.0% 7.3%
<b>Calvert</b>	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure	163 60 39 36 24	43.1% 15.9% 10.3% 9.5% 6.3%
<b>Caroline</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Assistance Unit Requested Closure No Dependent Children Work Sanction	124 51 21 17 16	46.4% 19.1% 7.9% 6.4% 6.0%
<b>Carroll</b>	Income Above Limit Assistance Unit Requested Closure Failed to Give Eligibility Information Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Work Sanction	154 107 47 37 34	32.9% 22.9% 10.0% 7.9% 7.3%

<b>Cecil</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination	244 115 73 69 41	38.1% 18.0% 11.4% 10.8% 6.4%
	<b>Top 5 Closing Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Charles</b>	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Failed to Give Eligibility Information Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Assistance Unit Requested Closure	325 141 90 90 48	39.5% 17.1% 10.9% 10.9% 5.8%
<b>Dorchester</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction Assistance Unit Moved	204 84 64 34 28	43.9% 18.1% 13.8% 7.3% 6.0%
<b>Frederick</b>	Income Above Limit Assistance Unit Requested Closure Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Failed to Give Eligibility Information Work Sanction	362 95 92 82 59	46.1% 12.1% 11.7% 10.4% 7.5%
<b>Garrett</b>	Income Above Limit Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction No Eligible Members Failed to Give Eligibility Information	99 32 25 11 8	49.7% 16.1% 12.6% 5.5% 4.0%
<b>Harford</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction	443 175 97 88 76	43.6% 17.2% 9.6% 8.7% 7.5%
<b>Howard</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Work Sanction Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure	251 196 99 68 48	33.9% 26.5% 13.4% 9.2% 6.5%
<b>Kent</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination	59 20 15 11 8	44.7% 15.2% 11.4% 8.3% 6.1%

<b>Montgomery</b>	Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Started Work	786 684 455 157 92	30.9% 26.9% 17.9% 6.2% 3.6%
<b>Prince George's</b>	Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Whereabouts Unknown	2,315 1,052 669 629 442	34.0% 15.4% 9.8% 9.2% 6.5%
	<b>Top 5 Closing Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Queen Anne's</b>	Income Above Limit Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination No Dependent Children	66 24 17 14 14	40.0% 14.5% 10.3% 8.5% 8.5%
<b>St. Mary's</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Failed to Give Eligibility Information Work Sanction Assistance Unit Requested Closure	194 89 60 59 55	34.5% 15.8% 10.7% 10.5% 9.8%
<b>Somerset</b>	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Assistance Unit Requested Closure Failed to Give Eligibility Information Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination	157 69 53 27 23	42.5% 18.7% 14.4% 7.3% 6.2%
<b>Talbot</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved Work Sanction	95 37 26 8 8	49.2% 19.2% 13.5% 4.1% 4.1%
<b>Washington</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination	410 140 129 109 58	41.7% 14.2% 13.1% 11.1% 5.9%
<b>Wicomico</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination Assistance Unit Requested Closure No Dependent Children	455 145 123 106 49	43.2% 13.8% 11.7% 10.1% 4.7%
<b>Worcester</b>	Income Above Limit Failed to Give Eligibility Information Assistance Unit Requested Closure Work Sanction No Dependent Children	164 58 42 29 10	48.2% 17.1% 12.4% 8.5% 2.9%

<b>Baltimore City</b>	Started Work	3,723	26.9%
	Failed to Give Eligibility Information	2,486	18.0%
	Failed to Reapply/Complete Redetermination	2,419	17.5%
	No Dependent Children	1,070	7.7%
	Assistance Unit Requested Closure	977	7.1%

### Full Family Sanctions: Statewide

Table 6, following this discussion, illustrates the frequency of sanctions for non-compliance with work and child support requirements in the state and across the 24 localities. Full family sanctions for work requirements are somewhat rare in the first year of FIP, identified as the reason for case closure in 5.5% (n=2,226) of the closed cases in the state. Even less common are full family sanctions for non-compliance with child support requirements, recorded as the closing reason in only 0.6% (n=257) of the state's closures.

### Full Family Sanctions: Local Level

The use of full family sanctions for non-compliance with work and child support requirements varies greatly throughout the state. Localities with the highest percentage of full family sanctions for failure to comply with work requirements are Calvert (15.9%, n=60), Charles (17.1%, n=141), and Somerset (18.7%, n=69) Counties. Jurisdictions recording the lowest percentages of sanctioning for work requirements in the first year of FIP are Wicomico County (2.4%, n=25), Baltimore City (1.9%, n=267), and Montgomery County (0.7%, n=19). Although sanctions for non-compliance with child support requirements are quite rare throughout the state, the jurisdictions with the highest percentage of such sanctions are Queen Anne's (3.0%, n=5), Carroll (2.4%, n=11), and St. Mary's (2.3%, n=13) Counties. In several counties (Allegany, Caroline, Frederick, and Garrett), there are no reported closures for non-compliance with child support requirements in the first year of FIP.

**Table 6. Full Family Sanctions<sup>10</sup>**

	<b>Full Family Sanctions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Maryland</b>	Work Child Support	2,226 257	5.5% 0.6%
<b>Allegany</b>	Work Child Support	62 0	9.8% 0.0%
<b>Anne Arundel</b>	Work Child Support	78 9	4.1% 0.5%
<b>Baltimore County</b>	Work Child Support	569 44	11.7% 0.9%
<b>Calvert</b>	Work Child Support	60 6	15.9% 1.6%
<b>Caroline</b>	Work Child Support	16 0	6.0% 0.0%
<b>Carroll</b>	Work Child Support	34 11	7.3% 2.4%
<b>Cecil</b>	Work Child Support	69 8	10.8% 1.3%
<b>Charles</b>	Work Child Support	141 11	17.1% 1.3%
<b>Dorchester</b>	Work Child Support	34 8	7.3% 1.7%
<b>Frederick</b>	Work Child Support	59 0	7.5% 0.0%
<b>Garrett</b>	Work Child Support	25 0	12.6% 0.0%
<b>Harford</b>	Work Child Support	76 15	7.5% 1.5%
<b>Howard</b>	Work Child Support	99 15	13.4% 2.0%
<b>Kent</b>	Work Child Support	11 1	8.3% 0.8%
<b>Montgomery</b>	Work Child Support	19 36	0.7% 1.4 %

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<sup>10</sup>This table reports the frequency of sanctions for non-compliance with work and child support requirements for the first year of FIP. It is worth noting that jurisdictions may not have implemented the new work and child support rules concurrently.

	<b>Full Family Sanctions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Prince George s</b>	Work Child Support	29 30	4 .3 % 0 .4 %
<b>Queen Anne s</b>	Work Child Support	17 5	10 .3 % 3 .0 %
<b>St. Mary s</b>	Work Child Support	59 13	10 .5 % 2 .3 %
<b>Somerset</b>	Work Child Support	69 1	18 .7 % 0 .3 %
<b>Talbot</b>	Work Child Support	8 1	4 .1 % 0 .5 %
<b>Washington</b>	Work Child Support	109 10	11 .1 % 1 .0 %
<b>Wicomico</b>	Work Child Support	25 18	2 .4 % 1 .7 %
<b>Worcester</b>	Work Child Support	29 3	8 .5 % 0 .9 %
<b>Baltimore City</b>	Work Child Support	267 12	1 .9 % 0 .1 %

## **Summary and Conclusions**

In sum, what do the administrative data presented in this report tell us about jurisdictional variations in TCA exiting case patterns and characteristics during the first full year of FIP implementation? Based on examination of the entire universe of exiting cases (n=41,212), the following key findings emerge:

1. All 24 local jurisdictions experience caseload decreases such that in all 24 subdivisions the TCA caseload at the end of FIP's first year (September 1997) is smaller than it was at the start of the program (October 1996).
2. In general, each jurisdiction's share of total exiting cases is closely in line with its share of the overall statewide TCA caseload. One notable exception is Baltimore City which accounted for 50.7% of the caseload but only 33.6% of the closing cases. All other jurisdictions' shares of closing cases equaled or exceeded their shares of the overall caseload.
3. For the year as a whole, the statewide pattern of closings can be characterized as generally linear. The first two months of FIP (October and November, 1996) have the largest number of exiting cases. This is followed by a few months of steady decline in the number of closing cases, with an upturn in closings occurring in March 1997, peaking in April 1997, and generally declining in subsequent months.

4. Overall, jurisdictions are quite similar in terms of the characteristics of their exiting families. Households leaving TCA typically contain one adult and one or two children. Statewide, 82% of the 41,212 exiting cases contain one adult; 49% contain one child.
5. Child-only cases comprise a significant portion of the exiting population, accounting for 15% of the closing cases statewide. Local rates of child-only cases among those exiting vary somewhat from a low of 8% of cases in Garrett County and 9% of cases in Queen Anne's County to a high of 19% of cases in Baltimore City and 21% of cases in Anne Arundel County.
6. At the time of exit, almost half (46%) of the state's TCA cases have a current spell length of one year or less. Specifically, in 23 of 24 jurisdictions, close to or more than half (43% to 70%) of all closing cases have a spell length of 12 or fewer months. Customers having recent spell lengths of more than five years are relatively uncommon throughout the jurisdictions, ranging from 2% of cases in Kent County to 11% of the cases in Allegany County and 18% of cases in Baltimore City.

7. Statewide, two reasons are virtually tied as the most common reason for case closure. Both customer failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process (n=7,997 or 19.9%) and customer income above limit (n=7,278 or 18.1%) account for approximately one in five case closures.<sup>11</sup>
8. In 21 of 24 jurisdictions, income-related closures are most common. Specifically, in 20 jurisdictions, the most common reason for case closure is the assistance unit's income surpassing the TCA eligibility threshold --many of these closures are due to customer's obtaining employment. In Baltimore City the most frequent reason for case closure is the recipient's start of work (n=3,723 or 26.9%). In the remaining three jurisdictions (Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties), the top reason for closure is failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process.

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<sup>11</sup>As discussed, many of these latter cases are ones where the customer left welfare for work.

9. Statewide, full-family sanctions for non-compliance with work requirements are rare in the first year of FIP, accounting for 5.5% (n=2,226) of all case closures. However, some jurisdictions report more work-related sanctions than others; localities with the highest percentages of full family work-related sanctions are Somerset (n=69 of 369 or 18.7%), Charles (n=141 of 823 or 17.1%), and Calvert (n=60 of 378 or 15.9%) Counties. Jurisdictions with the lowest percentages of work sanctions are Montgomery County (n=19 of 2,540 or 0.7%), Baltimore City (n=267 of 13,840 or 1.9%), and Wicomico County (n=25 of 1,053 or 2.4%).
  
10. Sanctions for non-compliance with child support requirements are extremely rare throughout the state, accounting for just about one-half of one percent (n=257 of 41,212 or 0.6%) of all caseload exits in the first twelve months. Jurisdictions with the highest percentage of such sanctions are Queen Anne's (n=5 of 165 or 3.0%), Carroll (n=11 of 468 or 2.4%), and St. Mary's (n=13 of 562 or 2.3%) Counties. Four counties (Allegany, Caroline, Frederick, and Garrett) did not record any closures for non-compliance with child support requirements in the first year of FIP.

For state and local program managers, we hope these data provide some useful information on the progress they have made during the first year of FIP and where to focus their energies and resources in the months to come. Will these trends stand the test of time? That is, will the second year of FIP resemble the first? For several reasons, we believe the answer to this question is no. First, for a number of

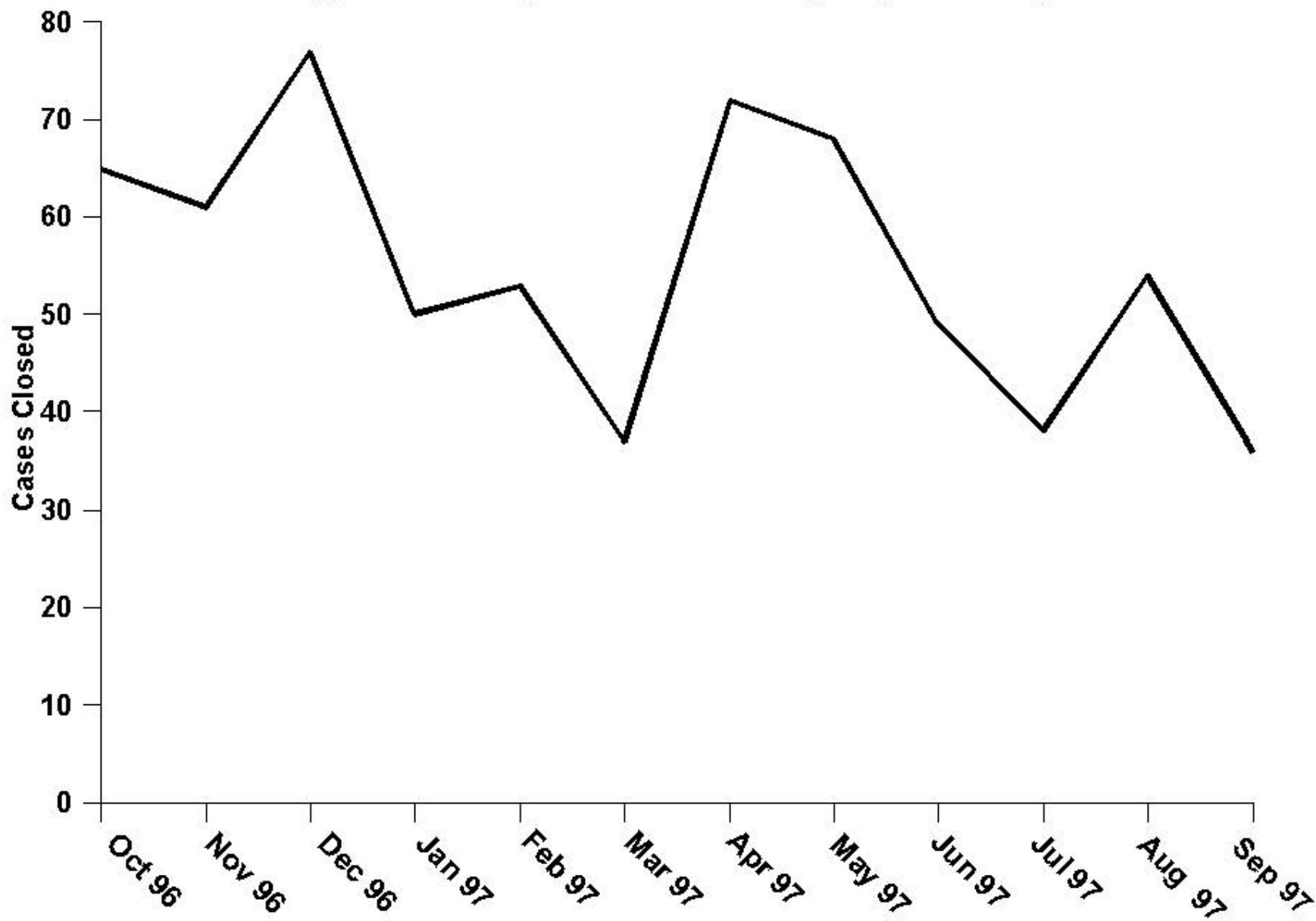
jurisdictions the size of their remaining TCA caseload is quite small. As the size of the caseload declines, localities will not be able to maintain the same rates of monthly closing cases.

Second, and perhaps more important, those cases remaining on the rolls will be more difficult to serve. Local agencies may find that the families they are serving now have more barriers to self-sufficiency than those who were able to transition to independence during the first year of FIP.

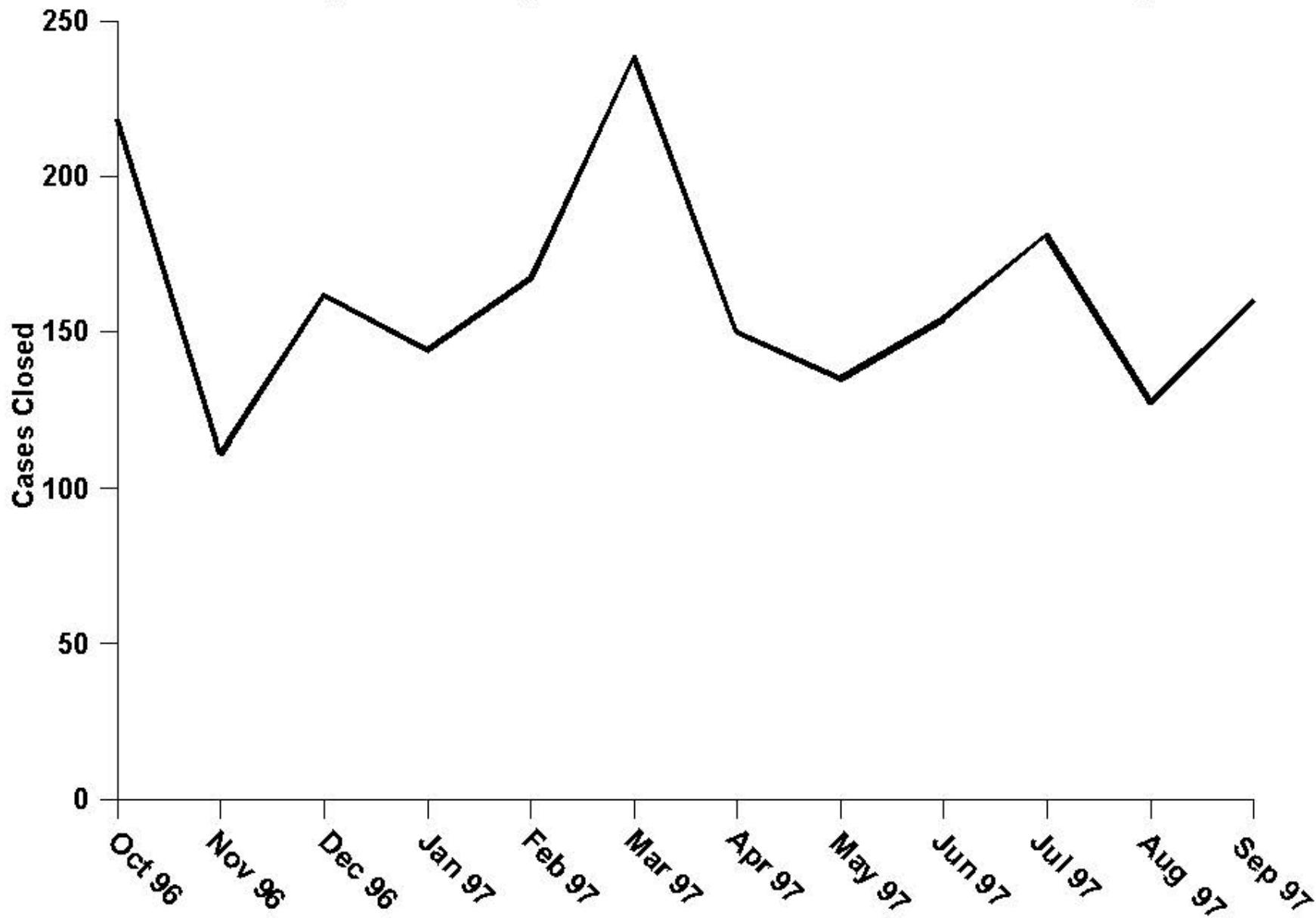
Third, there is the reality that at the very time local Departments have to work with the more troubled families remaining in the caseload they must also make concerted efforts to provide job retention services to former TCA recipients and meet increased federal work participation requirements.

These realities, coupled with the Year One findings documented in this report and our interim *Life After Welfare* reports, confirm the state's wisdom in setting aside dedicated purpose monies specifically to assist local Departments in meeting the more difficult out-year challenges in welfare reform. The first-year challenges associated with the implementation of welfare reform were not simple ones, but the challenges confronting us as we move into subsequent years are even more complex.

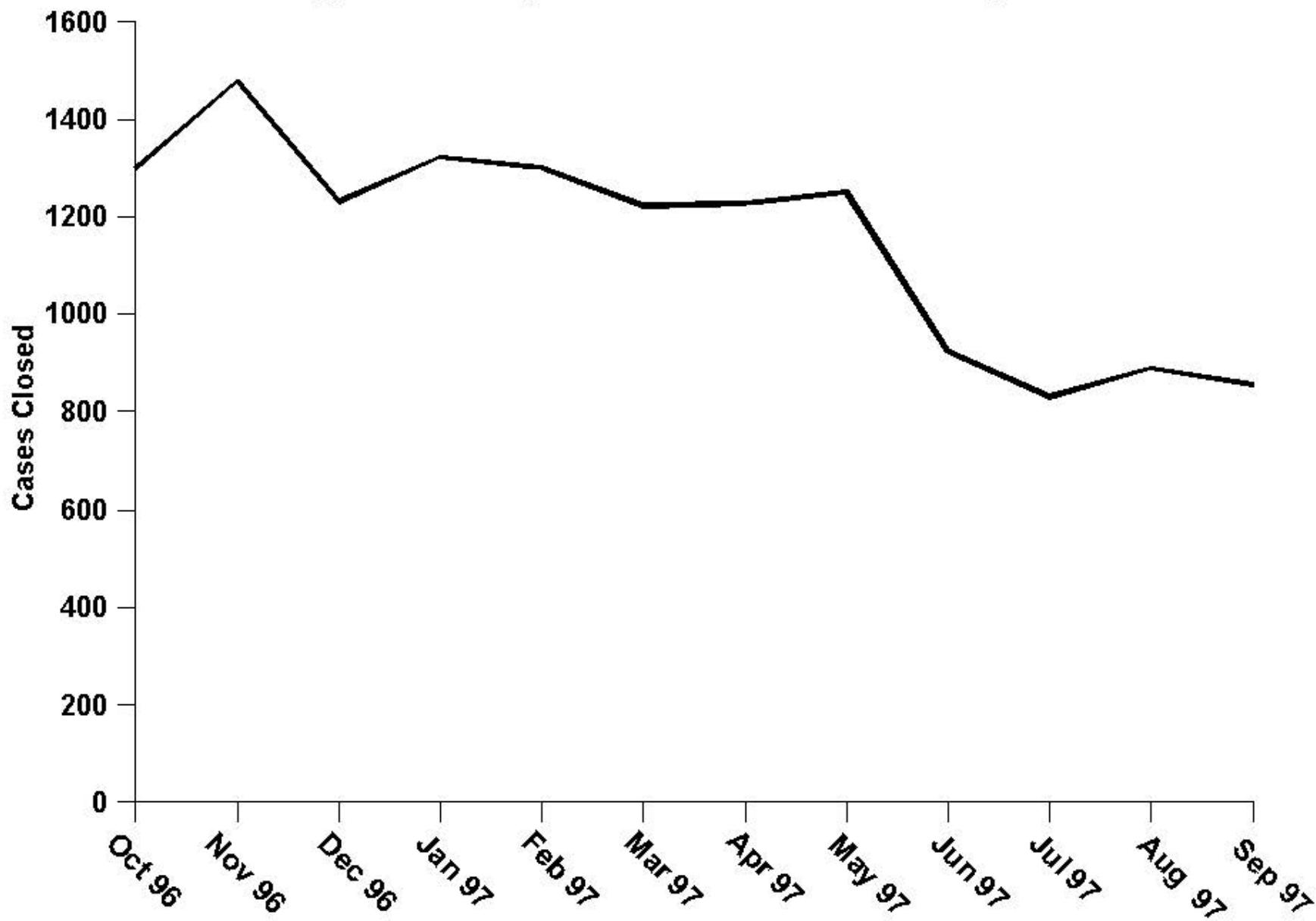
Appendix A-1  
**Closing Cases By Month: Allegany County**



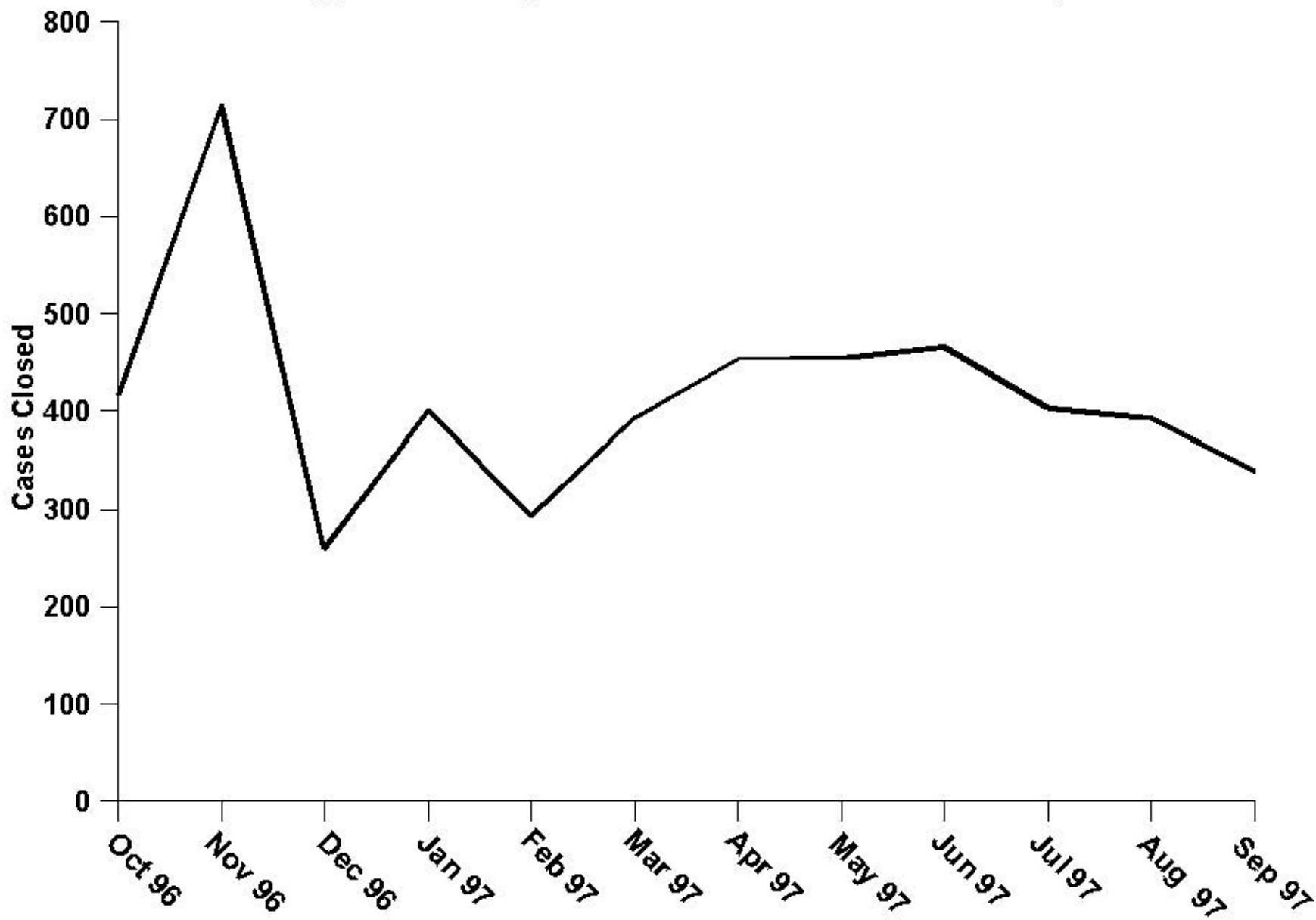
Appendix A-2  
**Closing Cases By Month: Anne Arundel County**



Appendix A-3  
**Closing Cases By Month: Baltimore City**

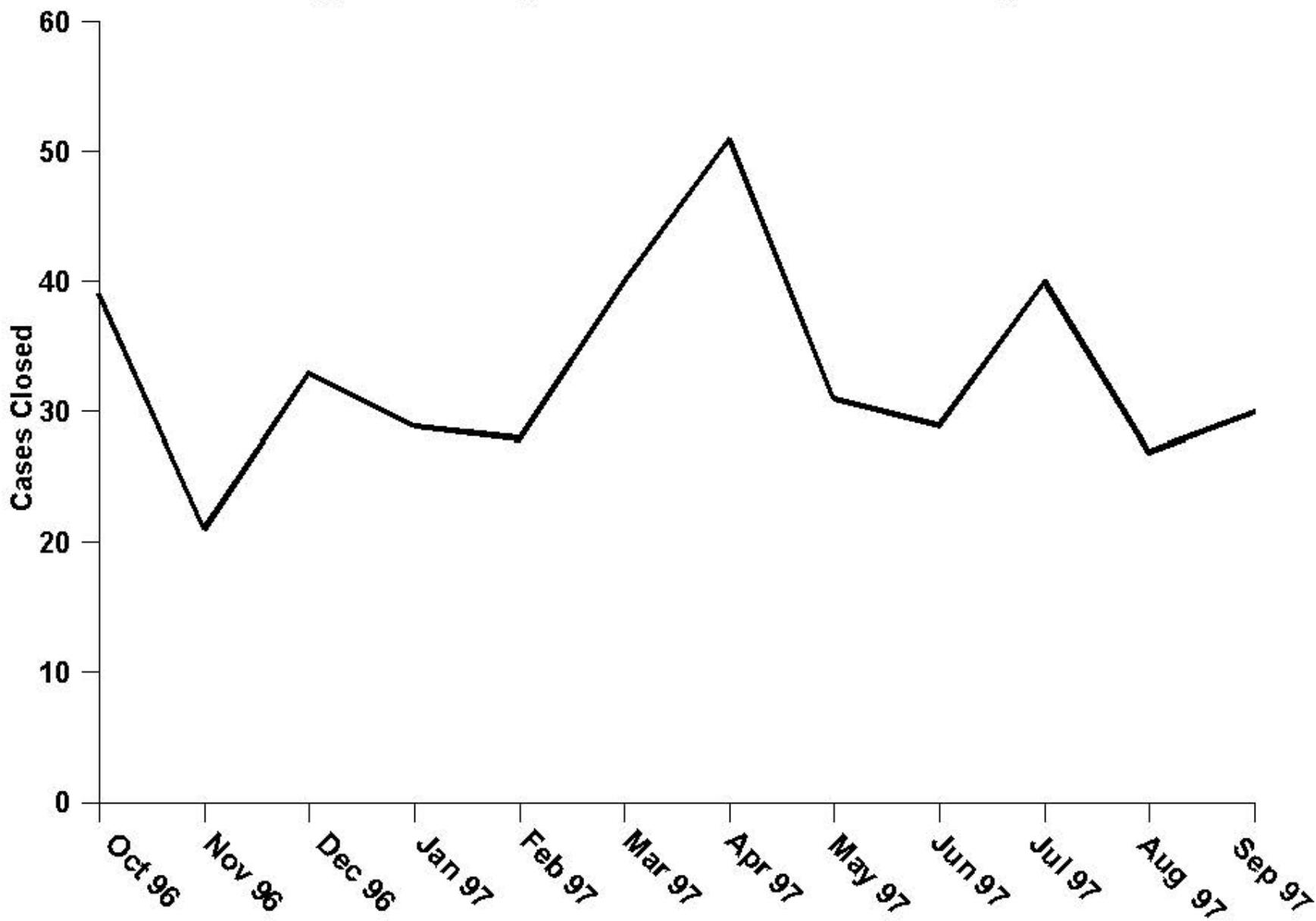


Appendix A-4  
**Closing Cases By Month: Baltimore County**

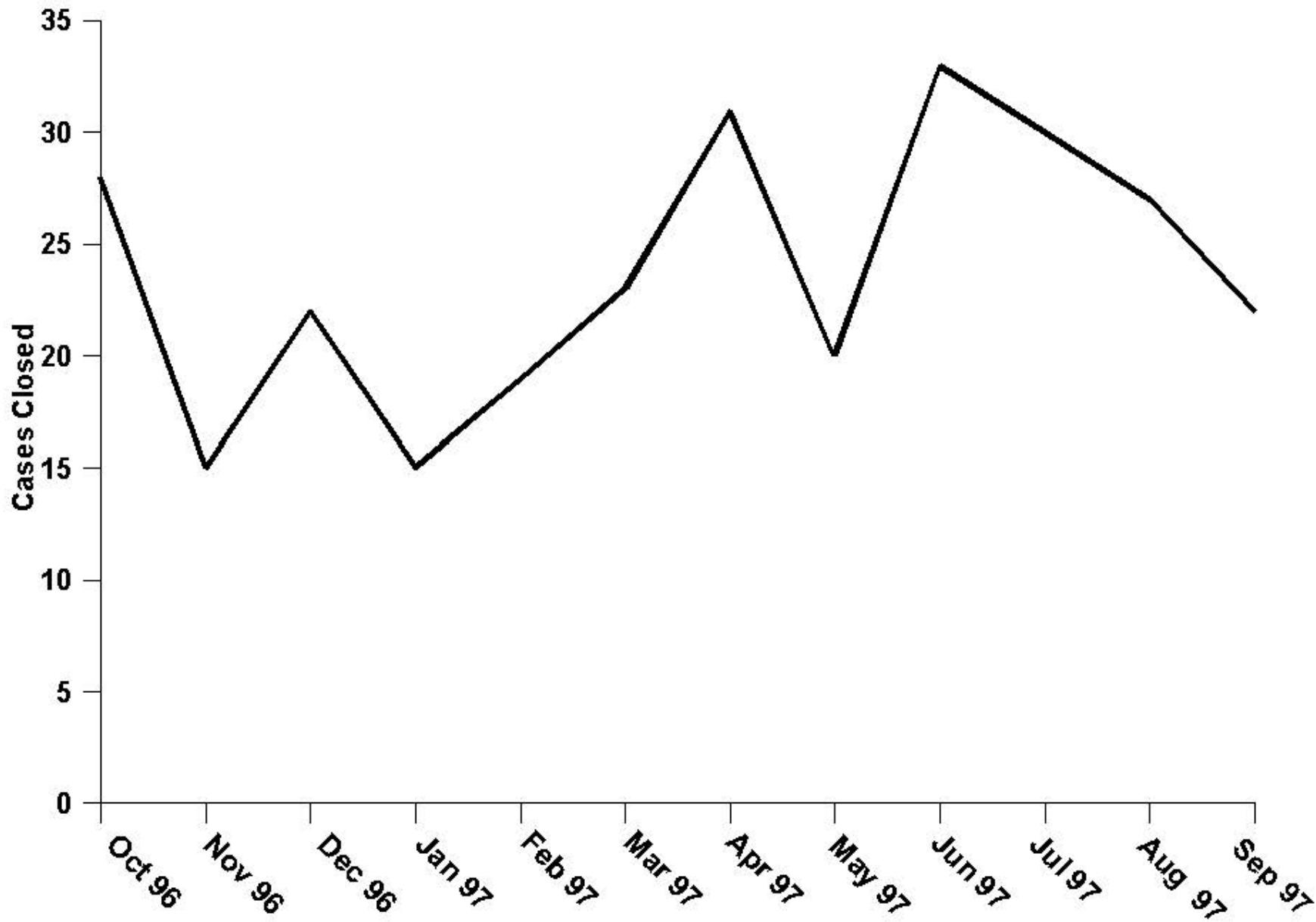


## Appendix A-5

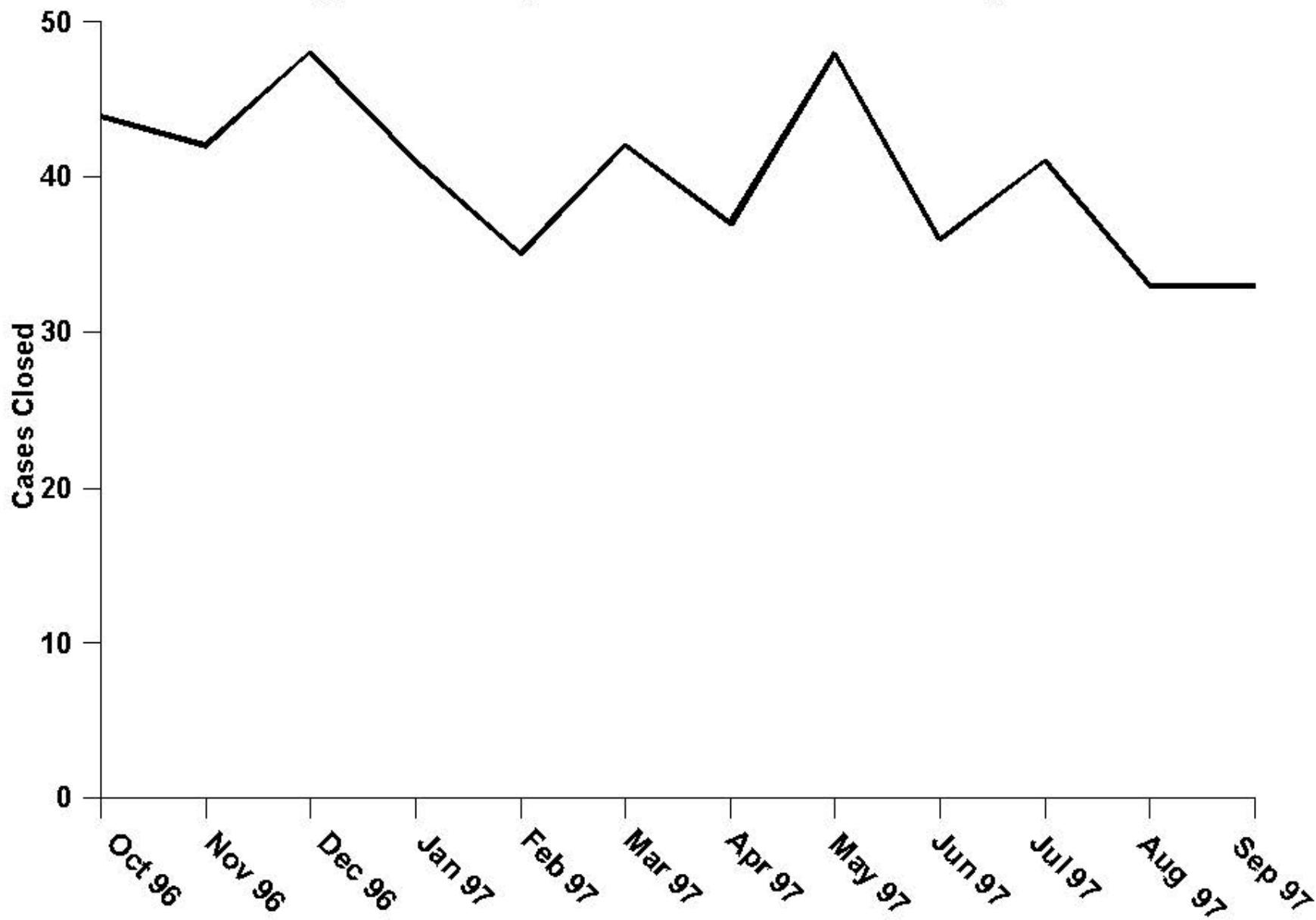
### Closing Cases By Month: Calvert County



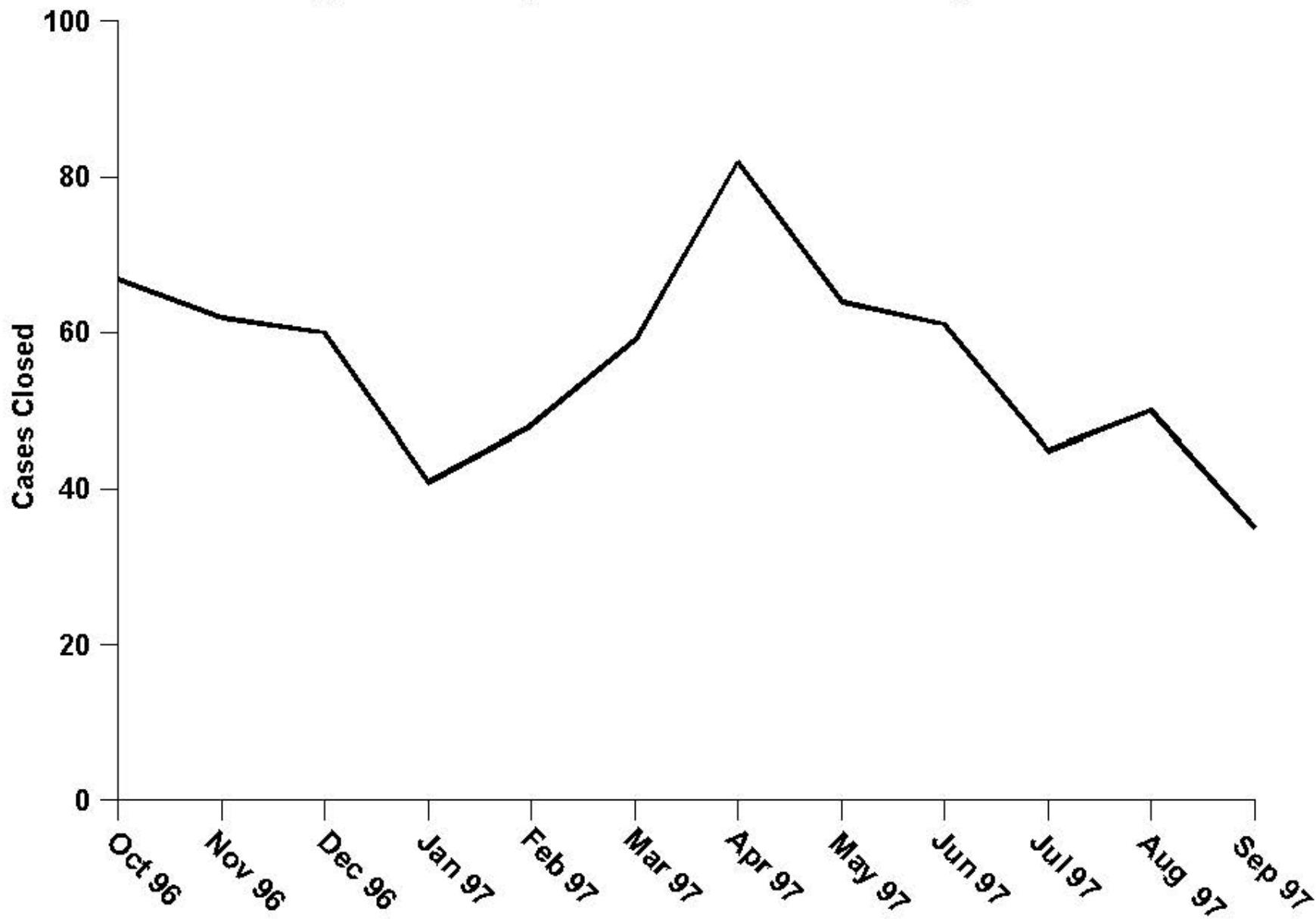
Appendix A-6  
**Closing Cases By Month: Caroline County**



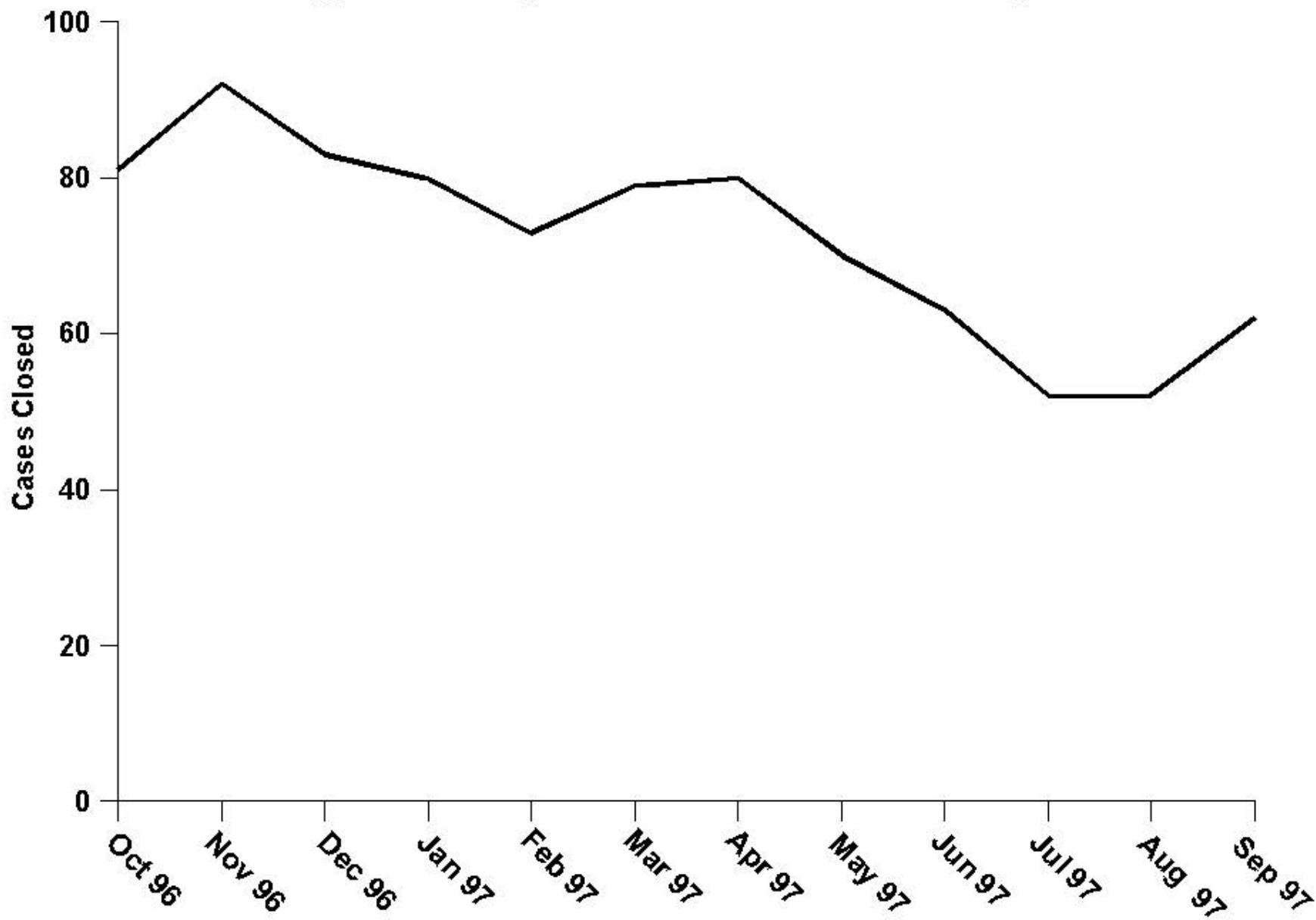
Appendix A-7  
**Closing Cases By Month: Carroll County**



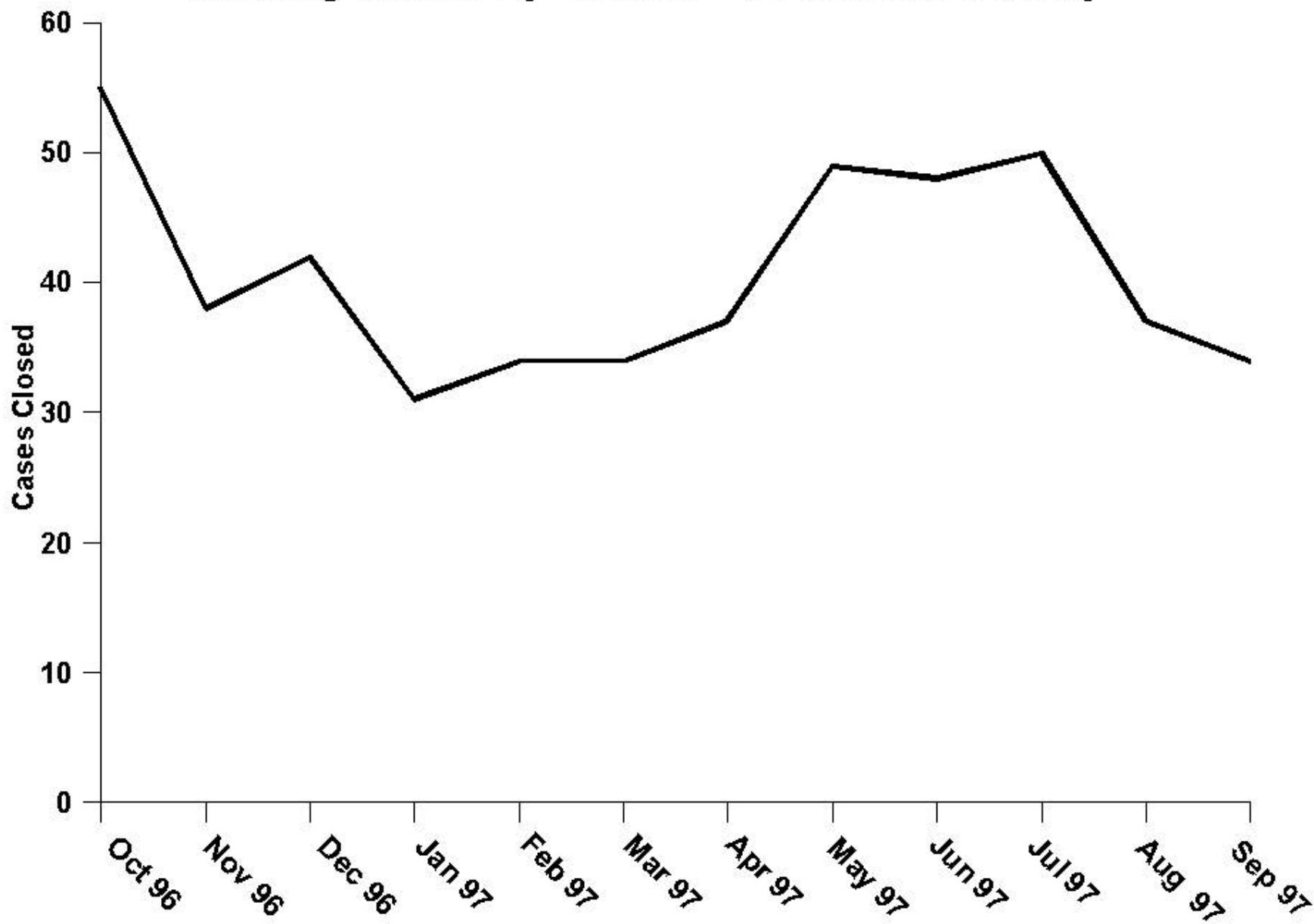
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**Closing Cases By Month: Cecil County**



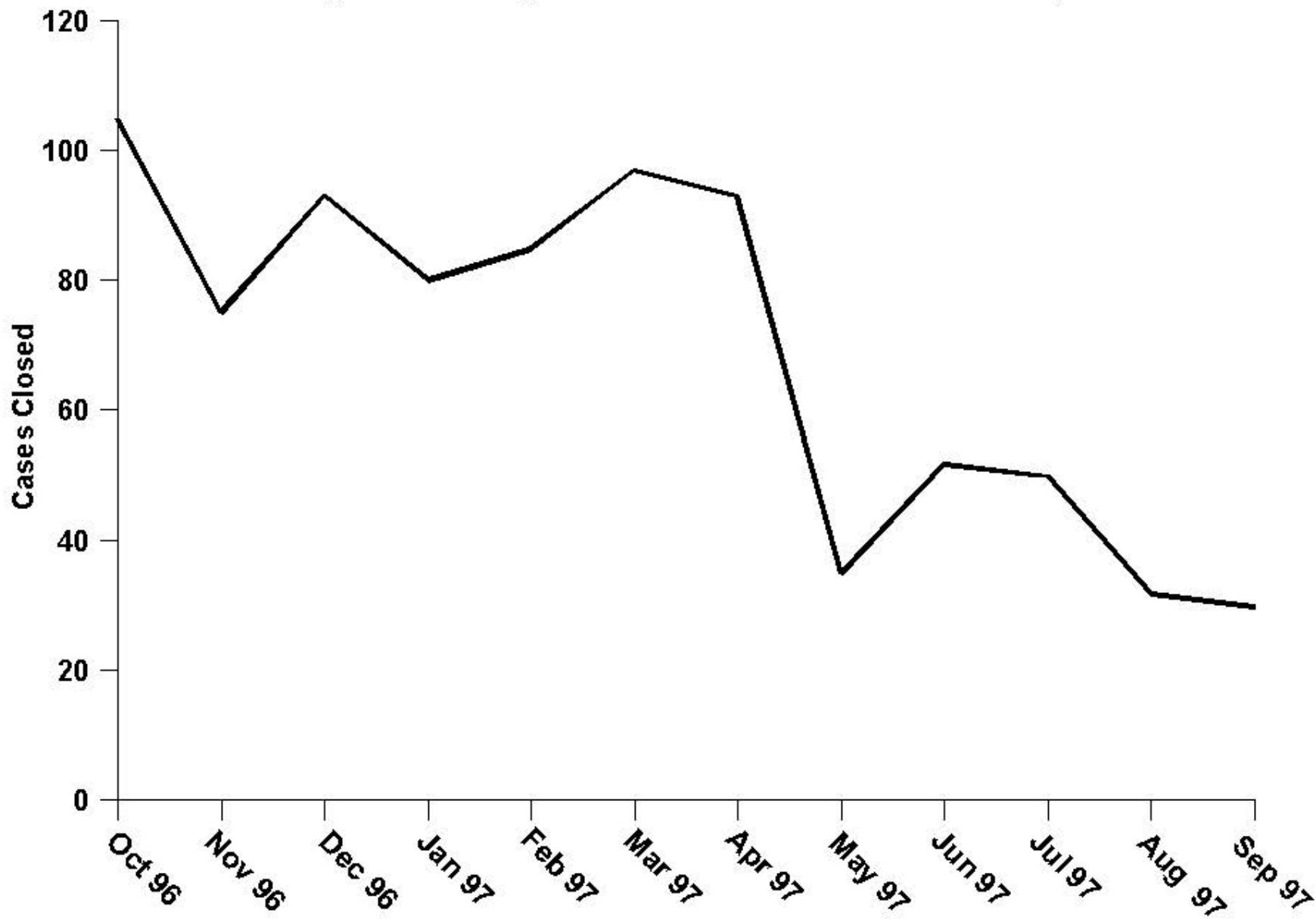
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**Closing Cases By Month: Charles County**



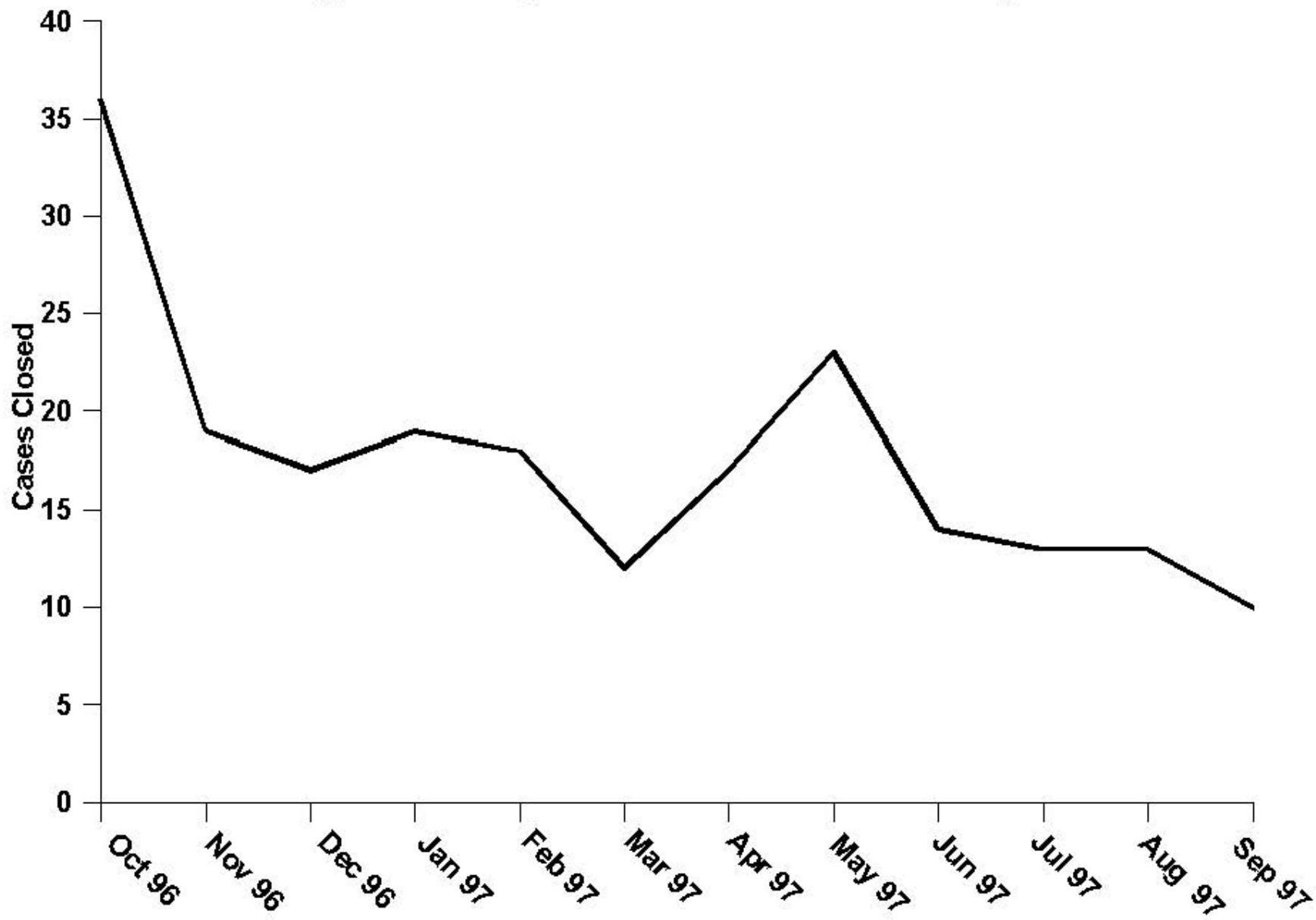
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Closing Cases By Month: Dorchester County



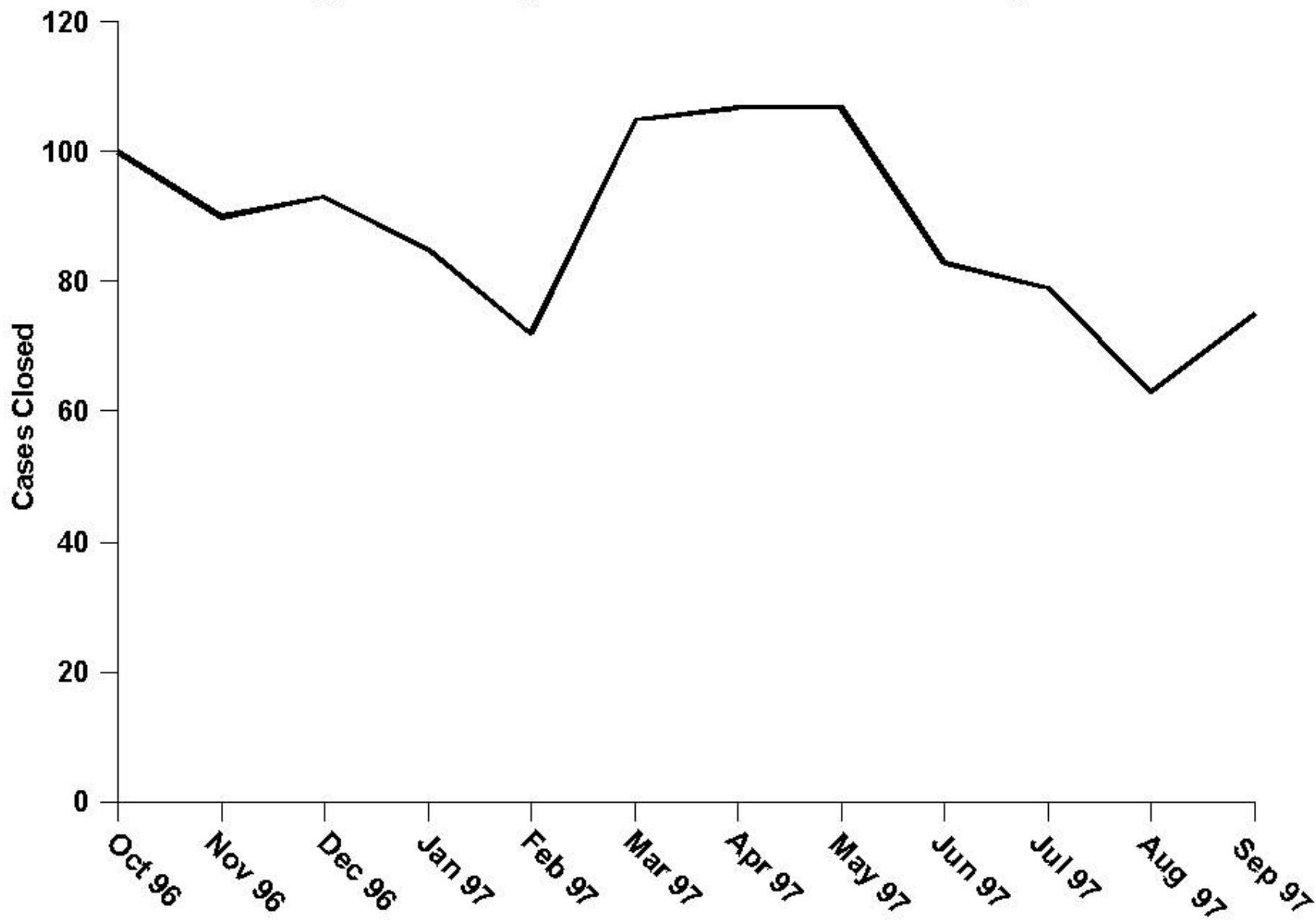
Appendix A-11  
**Closing Cases By Month: Frederick County**



Appendix A-12  
**Closing Cases By Month: Garrett County**

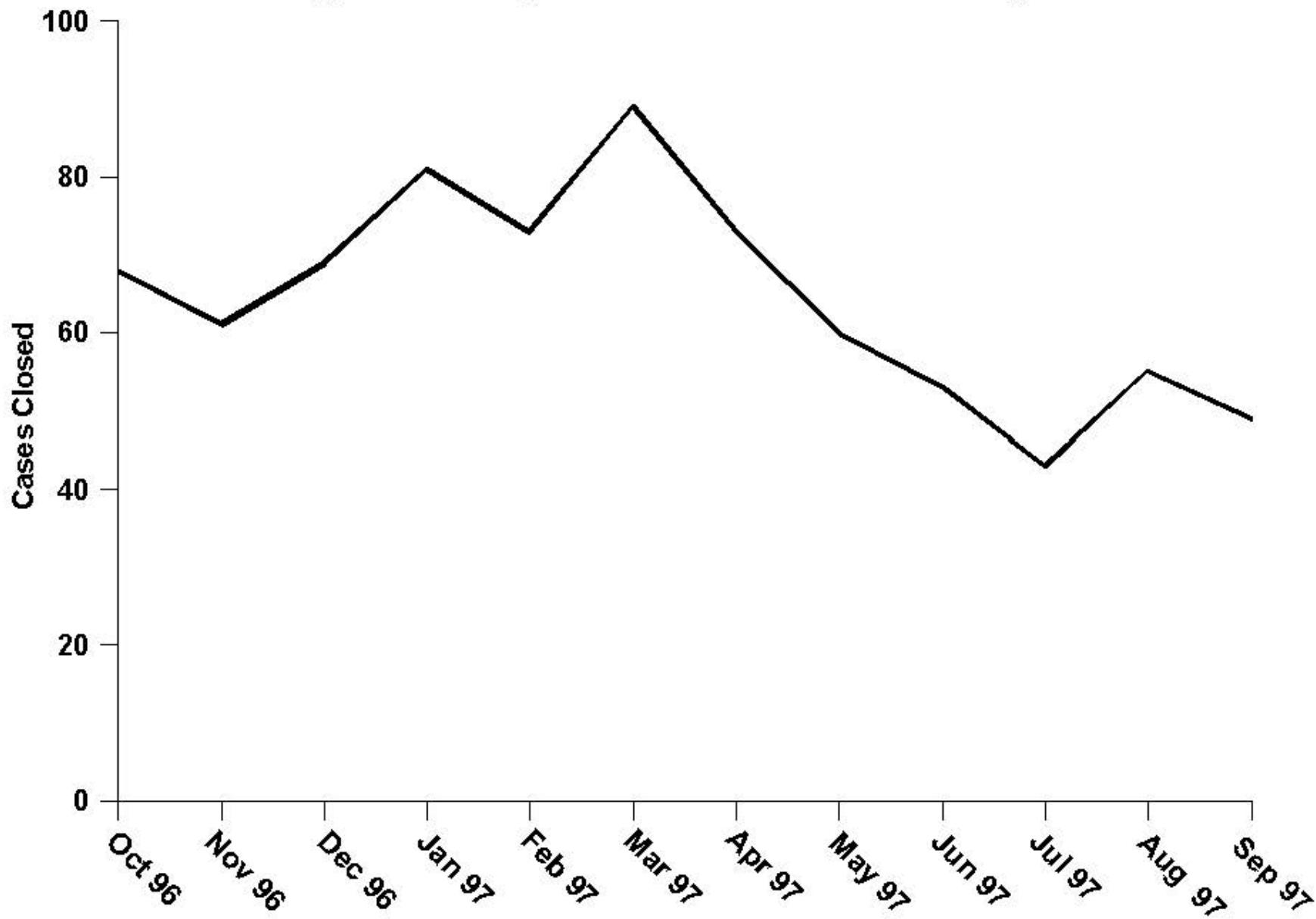


Appendix A-13  
**Closing Cases By Month: Harford County**

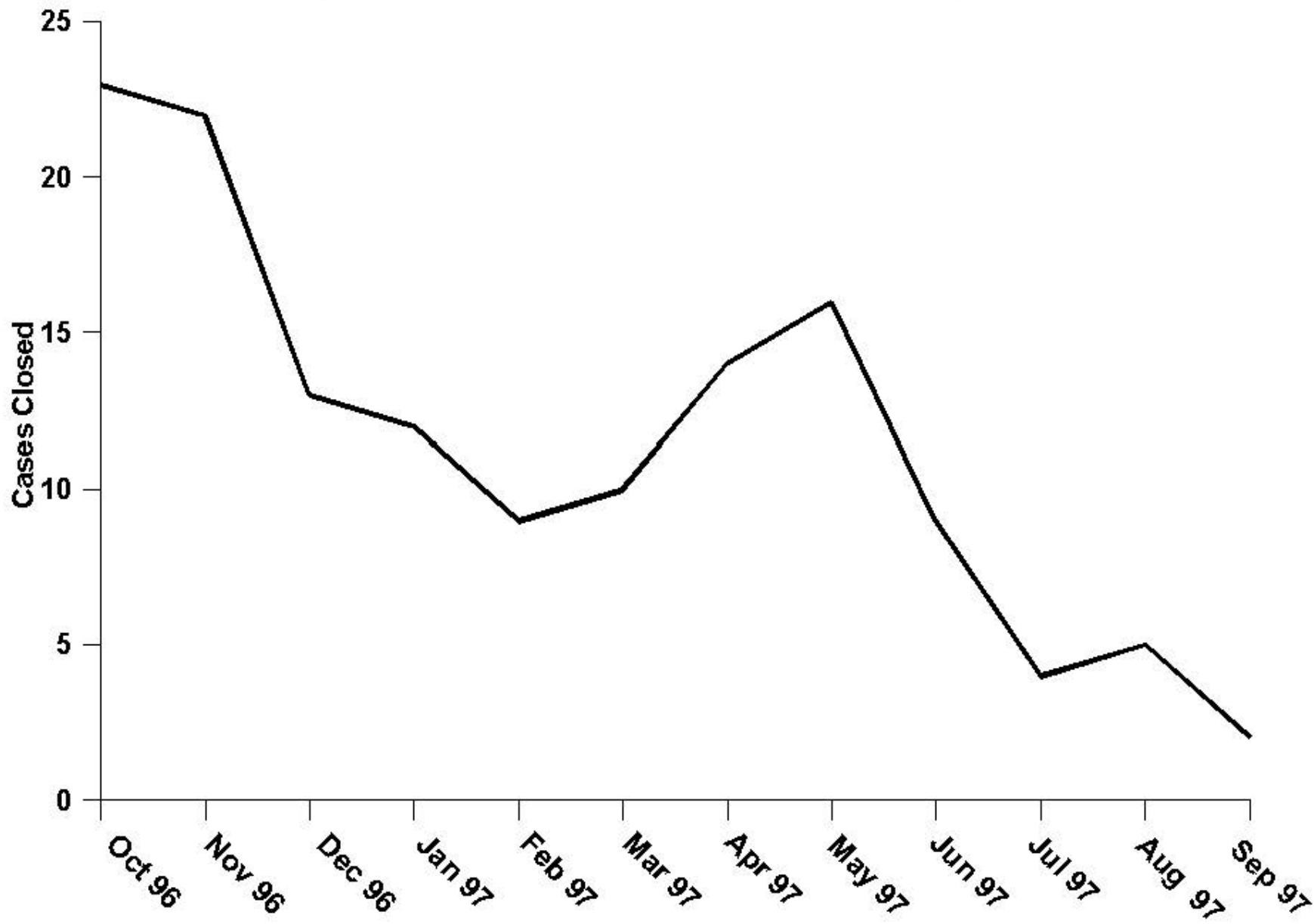


## Appendix A-14

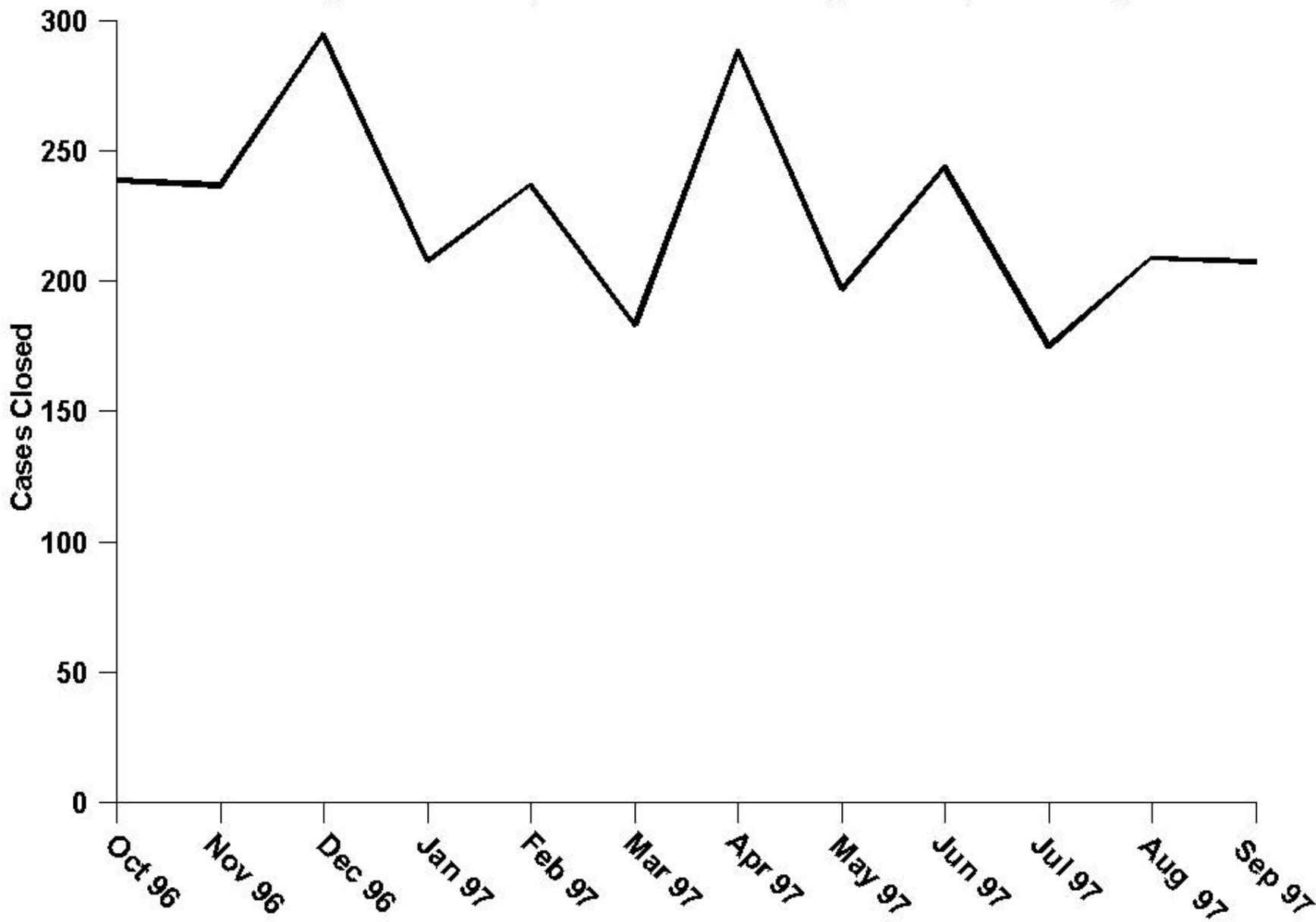
### Closing Cases By Month: Howard County



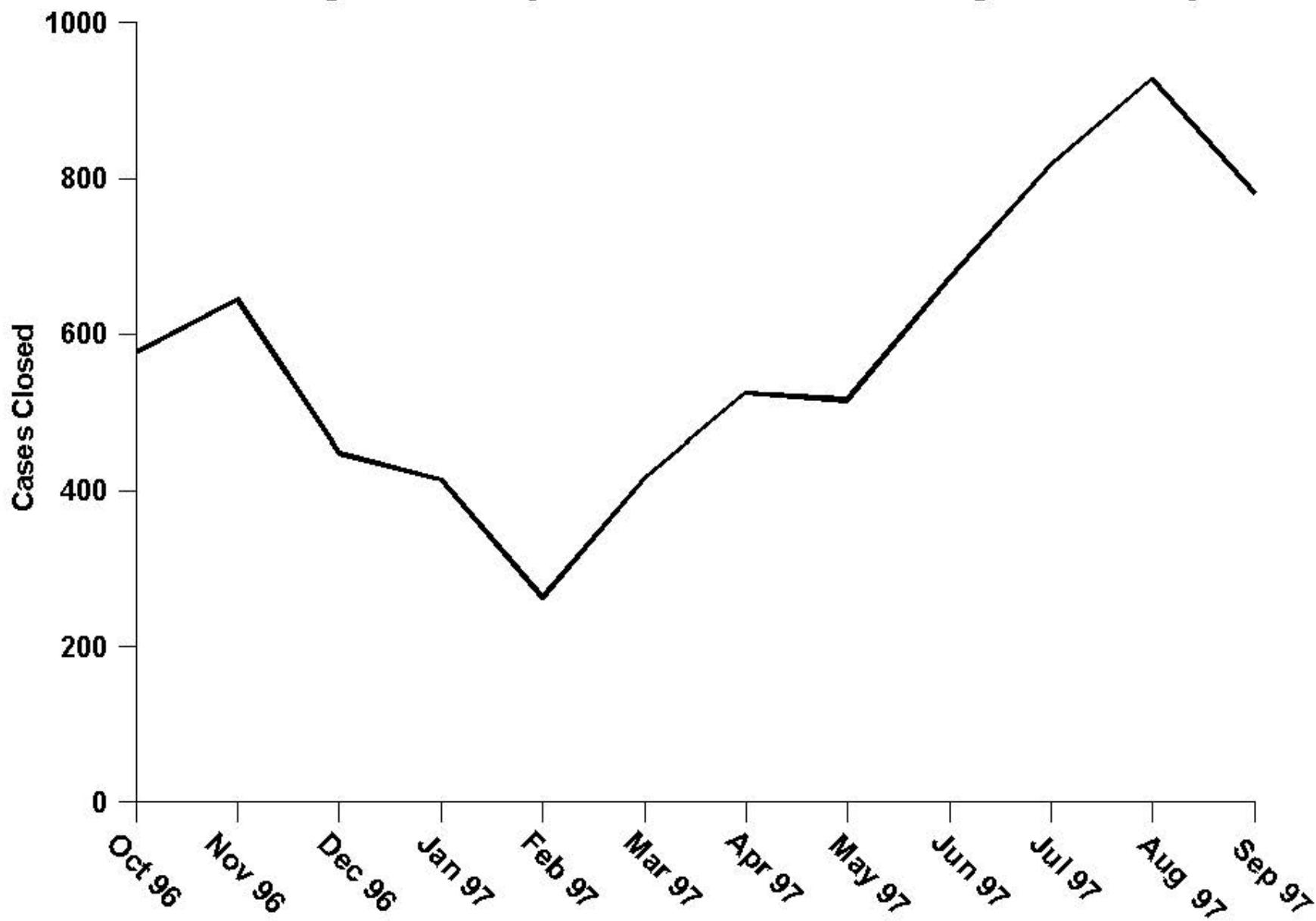
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Closing Cases By Month: Kent County



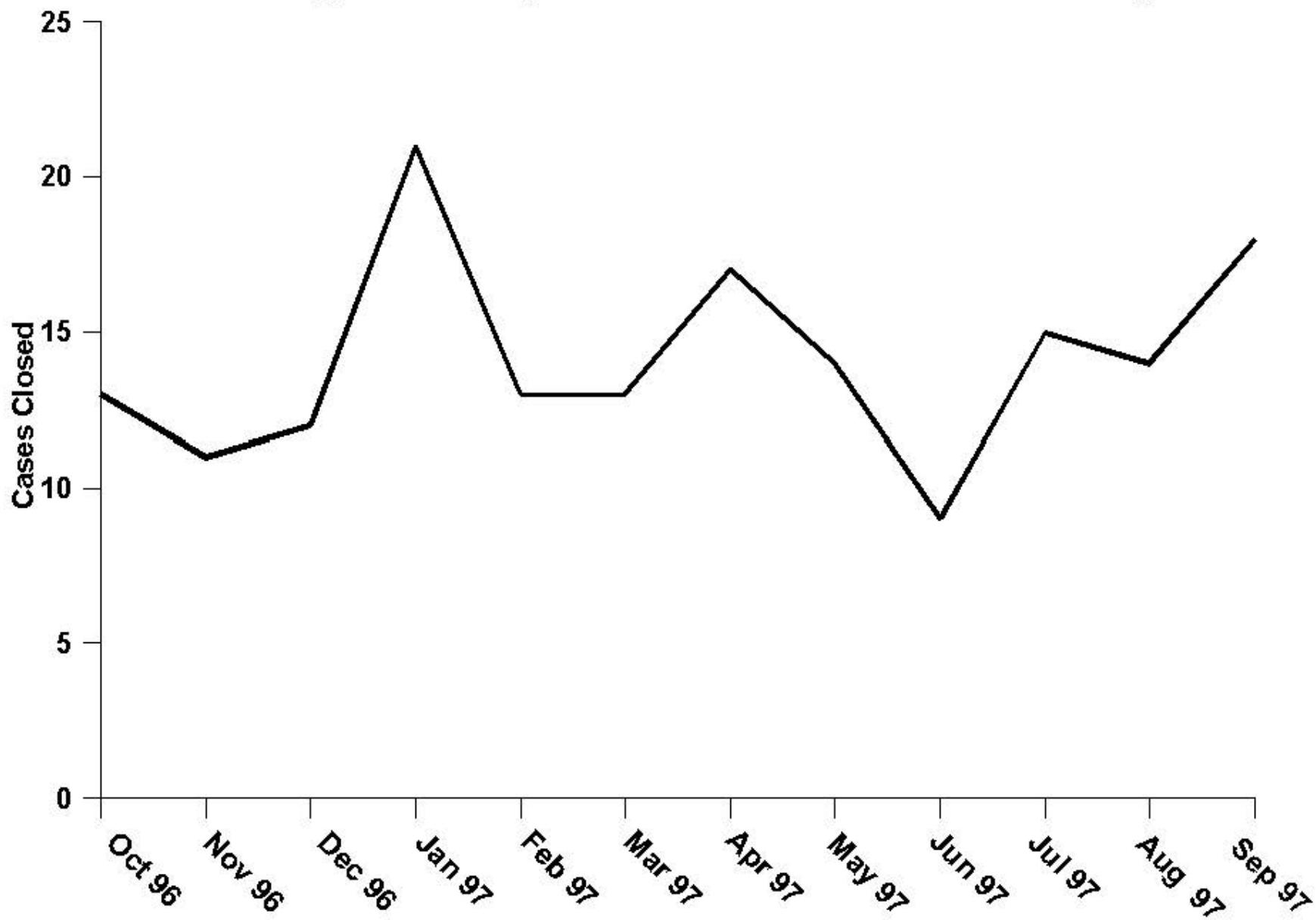
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**Closing Cases By Month: Montgomery County**



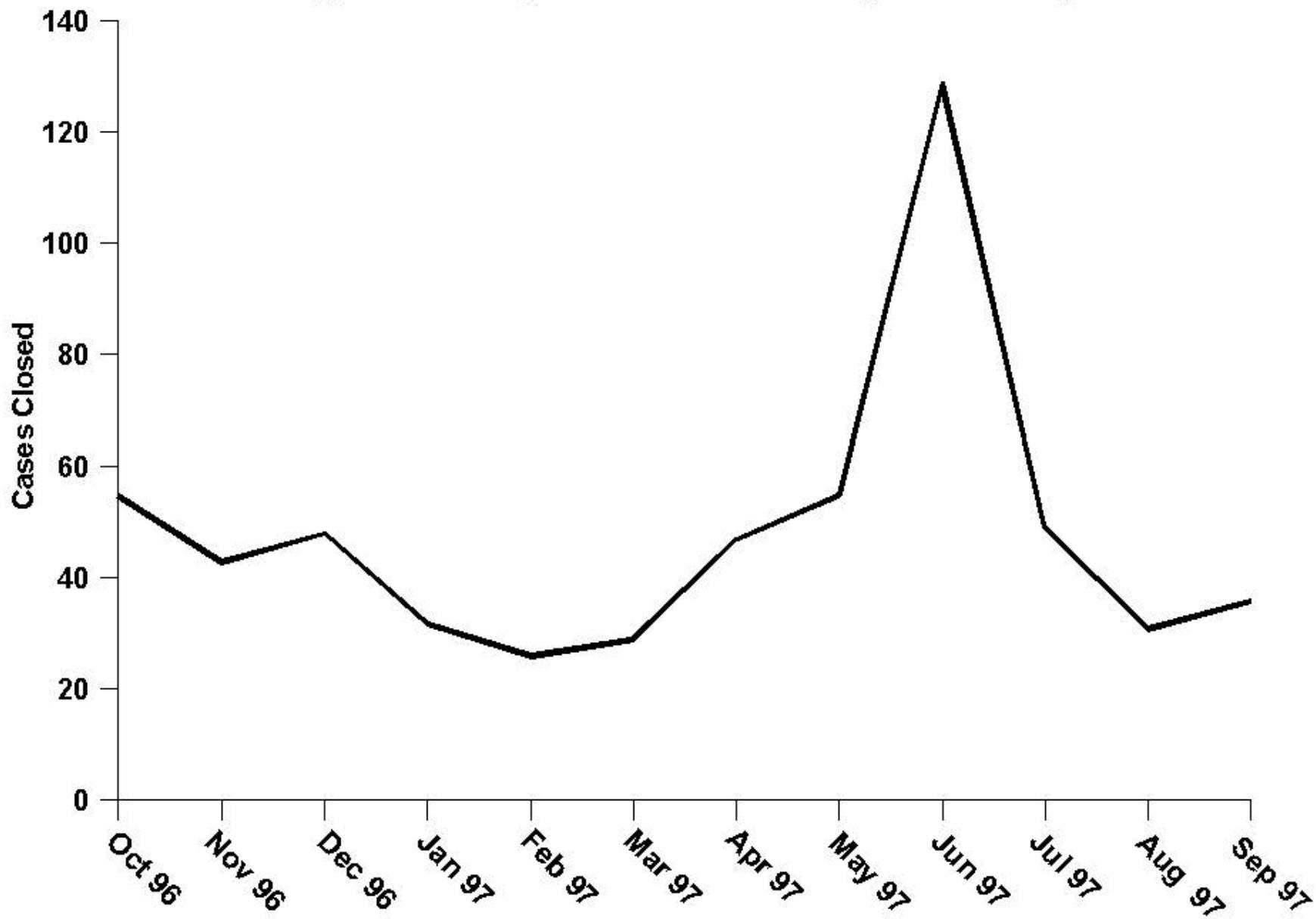
Appendix A-17  
**Closing Cases By Month: Prince George's County**



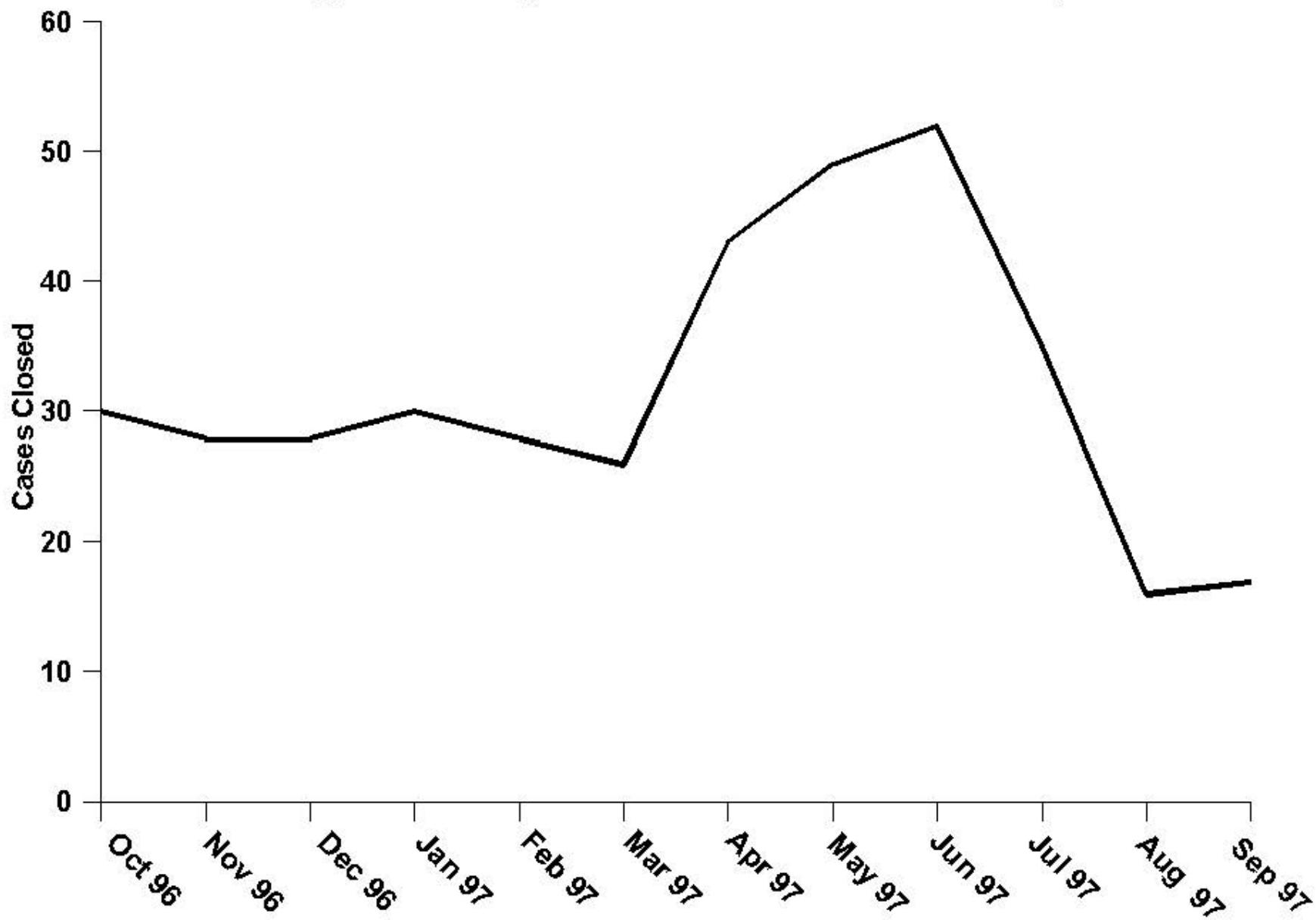
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**Closing Cases By Month: Queen Anne's County**



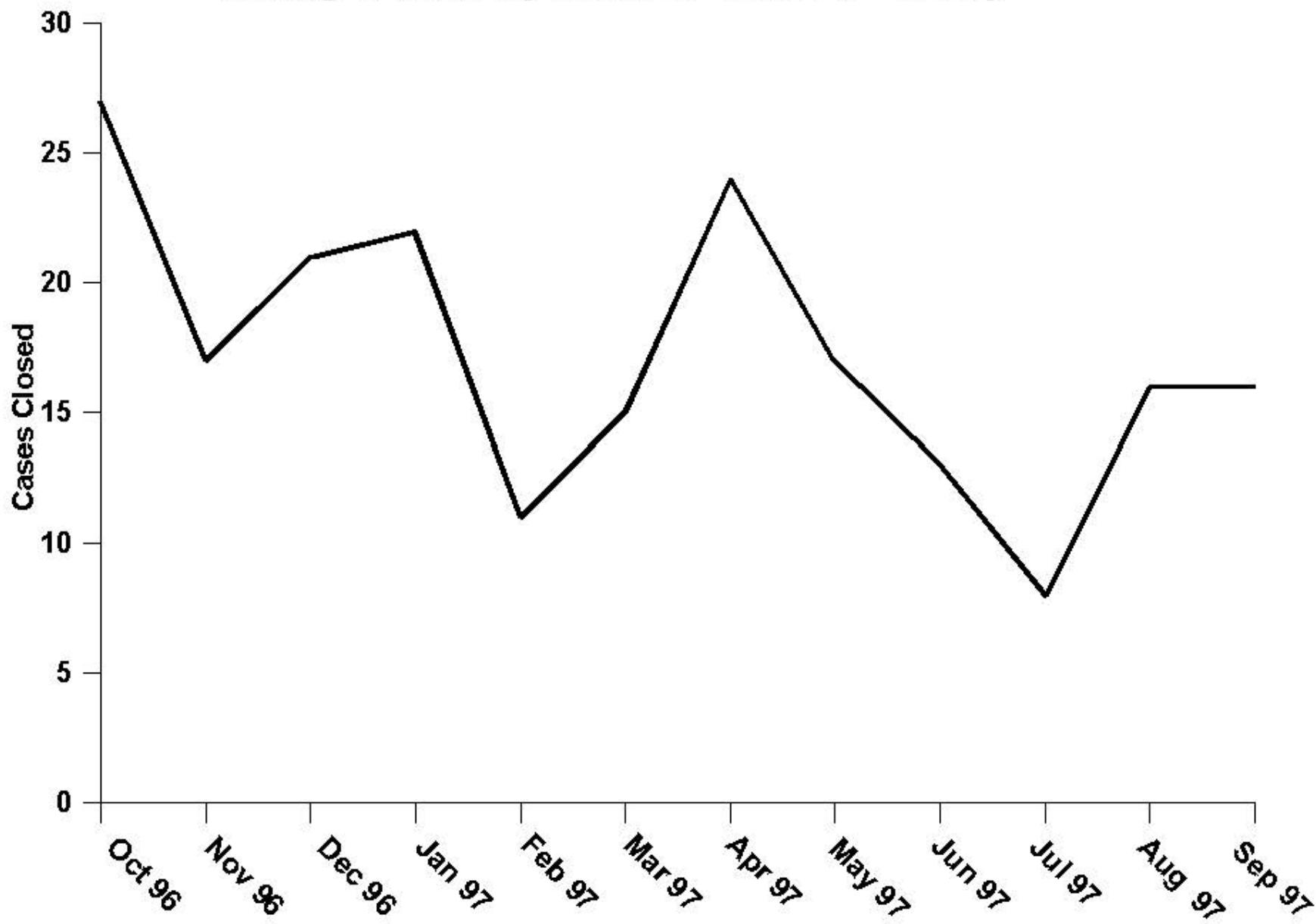
Appendix A-19  
Closing Cases By Month: St. Mary's County



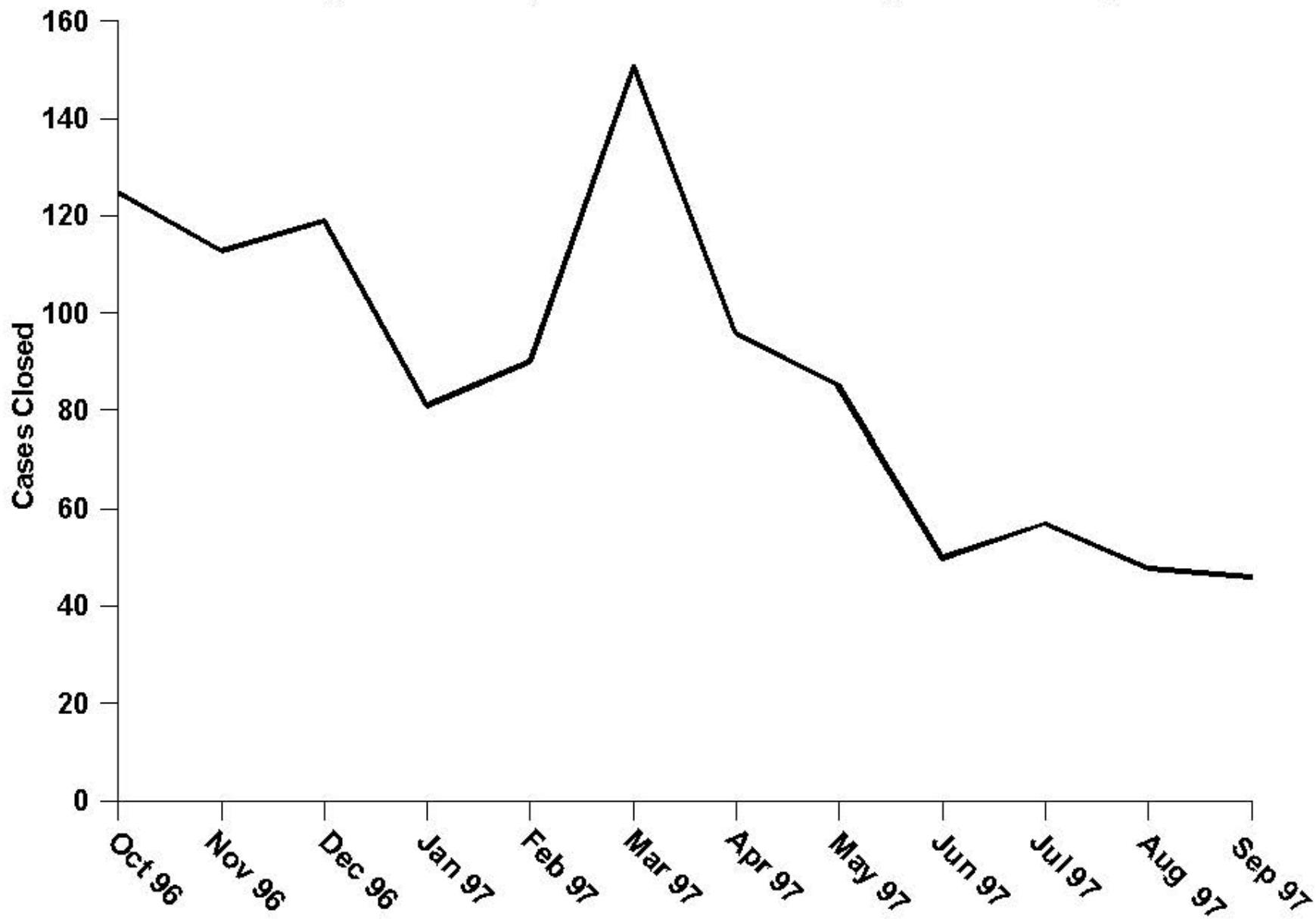
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**Closing Cases By Month: Somerset County**



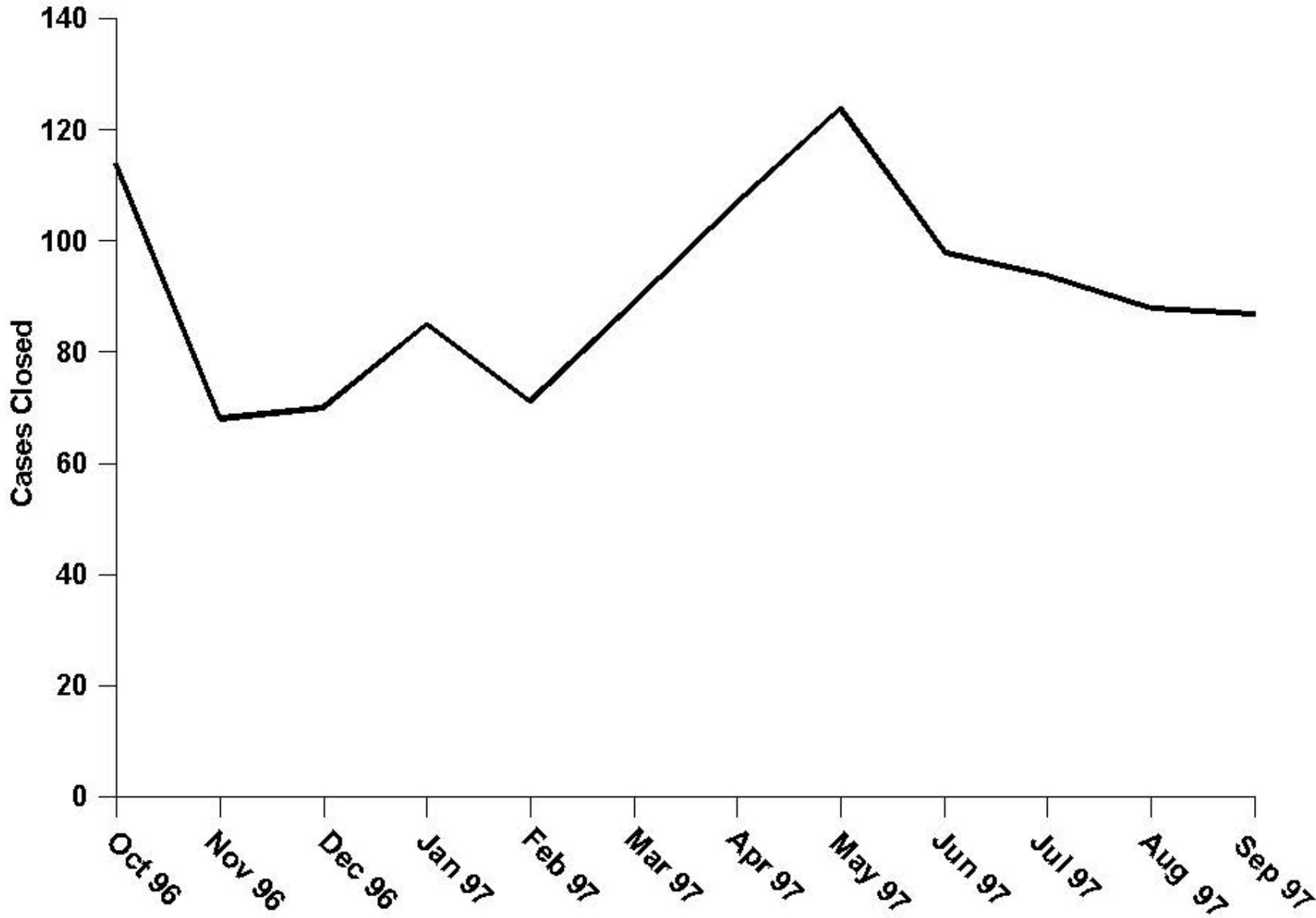
Appendix A-21  
**Closing Cases By Month: Talbot County**



Appendix A-22  
**Closing Cases By Month: Washington County**



Appendix A-23  
**Closing Cases By Month: Wicomico County**



Appendix A-24  
**Closing Cases By Month: Worcester County**

