

Child Support Program

SFY

2017

Provides services for the establishment of paternity, and the establishment, modification and enforcement of child support orders (financial and medical) to help families become or remain economically secure.

ESA Briefing
Book

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Child Support Program Overview

The Child Support program (established under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act) provides services for the establishment of paternity, and the establishment, modification and enforcement of child support orders to help families become or remain economically secure.

Three types of cases make up the Title IV-D child support program:

- **Current Assistance** – Individuals receiving TANF or Title IV-E Foster Care.
- **Former Assistance** – Individuals who previously received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TANF/AFDC) or Title IV-E Foster Care.
- **Never Assistance** – Individuals who have never received TANF/AFDC or Title IV-E Foster Care. Never Assistance cases include Medicaid only, child care only, and State Only Foster Care cases.

The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 awards incentives to state child support programs based on their performance on five measures:

1. Paternity establishment
2. Order establishment
3. Current support collected
4. Cases paying toward arrears
5. Cost effectiveness

The Child Support Incentive Scorecard included in this chapter shows DCS outcomes on the five measures over the past two federal fiscal years. Information is presented by federal fiscal year (FFY) because that is the timeframe used for awarding incentives earned by the state's child support program.

Cost avoidance, one of the indirect benefits of the child support enforcement program, is measured by reductions in public expenditures in cash assistance, food assistance and Medicaid for families.

Washington state studies have shown that a dependable stream of child support income for custodial parents and medical insurance coverage for children helps families increase their level of financial stability and independence, and consequently, leads to less reliance on public assistance programs and greater economic security.

TECHNICAL NOTES

DATA SOURCES: Data for this chapter was based on ESA Division of Child Support's Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) - September 2017 caseload. Data for incentive payments are provided by the DCS Fiscal Office.

DATA NOTES: Percentages may not add up to expected totals due to rounding.

Child Support Program Highlights, SFY 2017

The average monthly child support caseload was 334,027 in SFY 2017, representing a 2% decrease from 340,919 in SFY 2016. Within this caseload, average monthly *Current Assistance* cases decreased by 6% from 33,723 in SFY 2016 to 31,706 in SFY 2017; *Former Assistance* cases decreased by 2.3% from 188,329 to 184,086; and *Never Assistance* cases decreased by 0.5% from 118,867 to 118,236.

- The child support program collected a total of \$675.7 million in SFY 2017.
- The total cost avoidance was \$151.9 million. Of the total, \$100.6 million (66.2%) was for the Medicaid program; \$37.8 million (24.9%) was for the Basic Food program and \$13.5 million (8.9%) was for the TANF program.
- The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) reported 27,694 births to unmarried mothers. Of these births, DOH reports that 21,866 (79.0%) of the unmarried couples jointly signed and filed Washington State Paternity Acknowledgment forms. The vast majority of these acknowledgments were signed at the hospital as a result of the efforts of the Washington State's Paternity Acknowledgment Program.

Child Support Incentive¹ Scorecard, FFY 2016² and FFY 2017³

Measure	Goal Needed to Obtain 100% Funding	Actual Performance		Estimated Percentage of Maximum Incentive Reached	
		2016	2017	2016	2017
Paternity Establishment Percentage	80%	99.2%	98.7%	100%	100%
Support Order Establishment	80%	93.4%	93.3%	100%	100%
Current Collections	80%	66.3%	66.9%	75%	76%
Arrearage Collections	80%	61.9%	61.9%	71%	71%
Cost Effectiveness	5.00	4.27	4.27	80%	80%

Incentive Measure Formulas Used by the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement

Paternity establishment percentage: Number of children in the caseload in the FFY or as of the end of the FFY who were born out-of-wedlock (BOW) with paternity established or acknowledged divided by number of children BOW in the caseload as of the end of the preceding FFY.

Support order establishment: Number of IV-D cases with support orders divided by number of IV-D cases.

Current collections: Amount collected for current support in IV-D cases divided by amount owed for current support in IV-D cases.

Arrearage collections: Number of IV-D cases paying toward arrears divided by number of IV-D cases with arrears due.

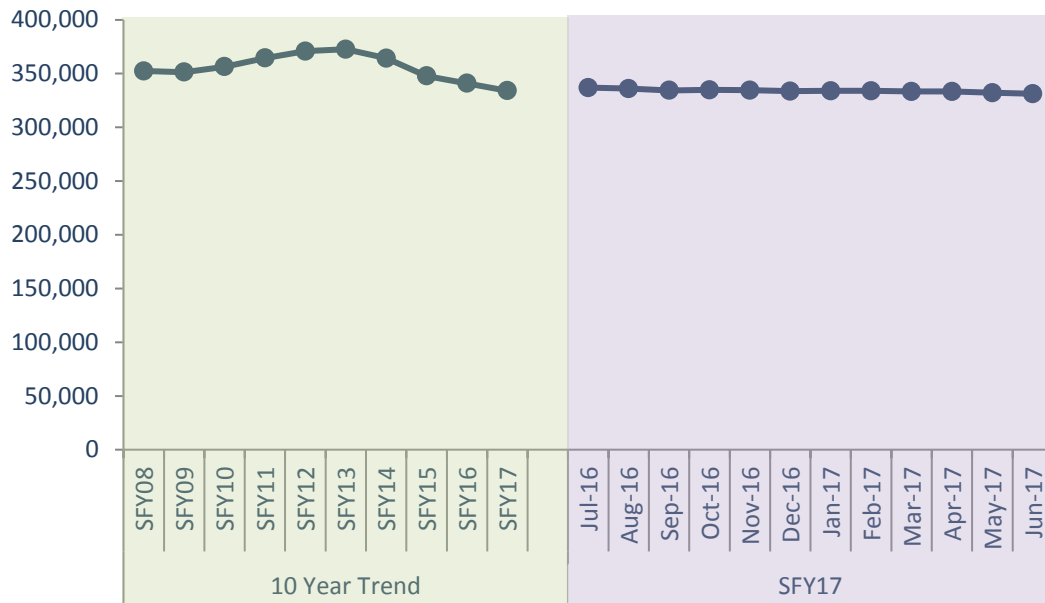
Cost-effectiveness: Total IV-D dollars collected divided by total IV-D dollars expended.

¹ DCS incentive payments for FFY 2016 are based on DCS actual FFY 2016 performance and OCSE FFY 2016 preliminary performance results for all other states. DCS incentive payments for FFY 2017 are based on DCS actual FFY 2017 performance and OCSE FFY 2017 preliminary performance results for all other states. Data source: DCS Fiscal Office.

² FFY 2016 data is from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) 2016 Preliminary Report.

³ FFY 2017 data is preliminary based on unaudited federal reports.

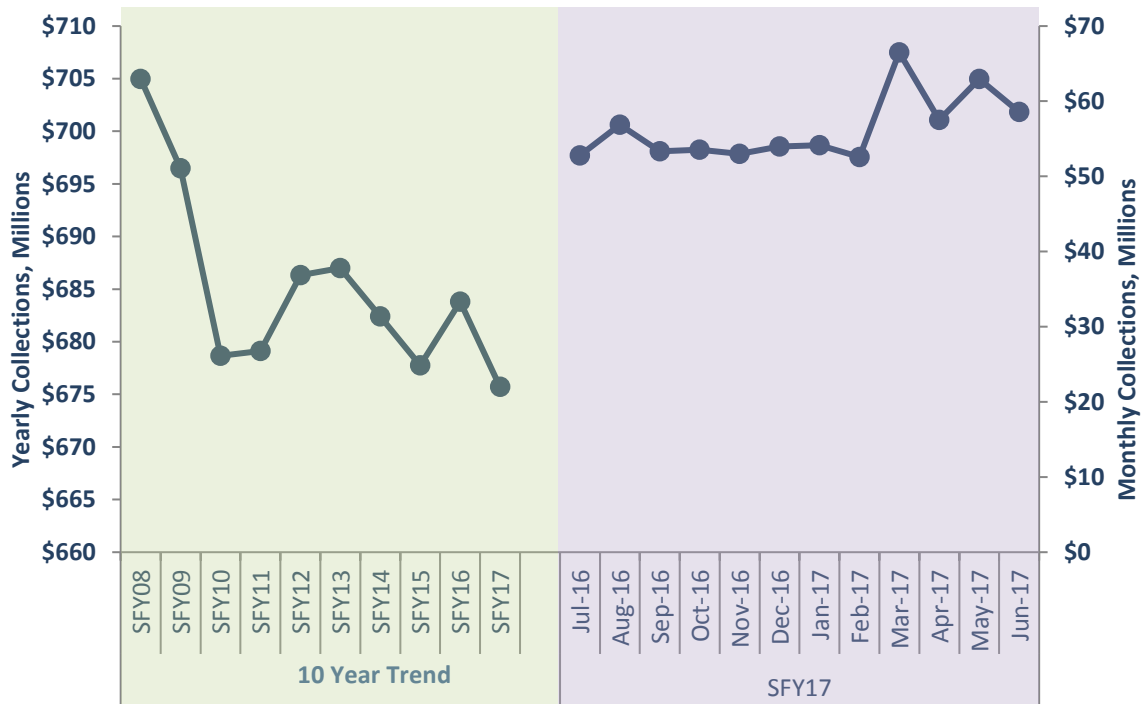
Child Support Caseload, SFY 2008 – SFY 2017



SFY	Monthly Average Caseload	SFY	Monthly Average Caseload
SFY08	352,422	SFY13	372,701
SFY09	351,315	SFY14	364,295
SFY10	356,436	SFY15	347,740
SFY11	364,535	SFY16	340,919
SFY12	370,830	SFY17	334,027

SFY 2017	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Caseload
July	32,114	185,749	119,027	336,890
August	32,066	185,635	118,299	336,000
September	32,206	184,637	117,601	334,444
October	32,656	184,422	117,809	334,887
November	32,009	184,605	117,930	334,544
December	31,961	183,838	117,805	333,604
January	32,610	183,174	118,141	333,925
February	31,943	183,591	118,377	333,911
March	31,180	183,827	118,338	333,345
April	31,210	183,703	118,478	333,391
May	30,630	182,978	118,502	332,110
June	29,882	182,867	118,527	331,276
Mo. Avg.	31,706	184,086	118,236	334,027

Child Support Collections, SFY 2008 – SFY 2017



SFY	Collections	SFY	Collections
SFY08	\$704,983,914	SFY13	\$686,994,705
SFY09	\$696,497,265	SFY14	\$682,411,249
SFY10	\$678,663,012	SFY15	\$677,763,250
SFY11	\$679,114,124	SFY16	\$683,807,632
SFY12	\$686,339,317	SFY17	\$675,702,583

SFY 2017	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Collections
July	\$1,694,375	\$19,426,599	\$31,647,748	\$52,768,722
August	\$1,846,394	\$21,180,825	\$33,848,698	\$56,875,917
September	\$1,737,529	\$19,427,821	\$32,158,185	\$53,323,535
October	\$1,754,738	\$19,691,842	\$32,113,944	\$53,560,524
November	\$1,672,540	\$19,233,613	\$32,067,934	\$52,974,087
December	\$1,726,336	\$19,466,902	\$32,769,073	\$53,962,312
January	\$1,747,565	\$19,739,247	\$32,641,741	\$54,128,553
February	\$1,721,079	\$18,931,871	\$31,934,762	\$52,587,712
March	\$2,785,043	\$26,348,184	\$37,358,652	\$66,491,878
April	\$2,043,623	\$21,871,278	\$33,590,574	\$57,505,475
May	\$2,228,223	\$24,143,658	\$36,593,357	\$62,965,238
June	\$1,933,482	\$21,779,870	\$34,845,278	\$58,558,630
Total	\$22,890,927	\$251,241,710	\$401,569,946	\$675,702,583

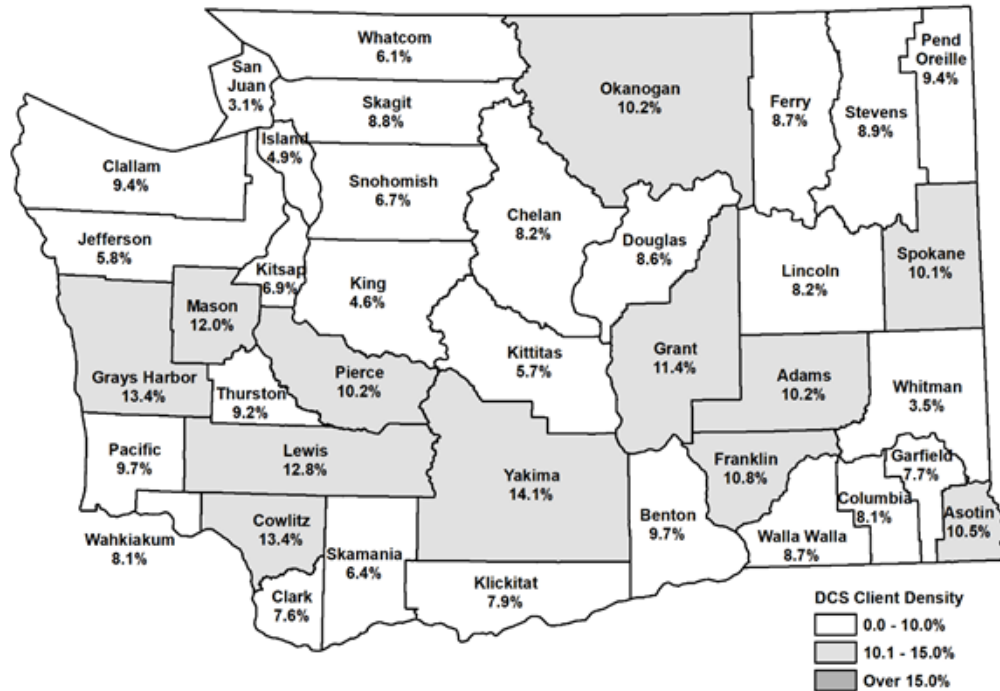
Parents with DCS Cases by County of Residence, June 2017 Snapshot

County	Parents	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served	County	Parents	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served
Adams	2,021	19,870	10.2%	Lewis	9,902	77,440	12.8%
Asotin	2,350	22,290	10.5%	Lincoln	878	10,700	8.2%
Benton	18,769	193,500	9.7%	Mason	7,579	63,190	12.0%
Chelan	6,323	76,830	8.2%	Okanogan	4,308	42,110	10.2%
Clallam	6,970	74,240	9.4%	Pacific	2,067	21,250	9.7%
Clark	35,666	471,000	7.6%	Pend Oreille	1,256	13,370	9.4%
Columbia	334	4,100	8.1%	Pierce	87,406	859,400	10.2%
Cowlitz	14,228	105,900	13.4%	San Juan	517	16,510	3.1%
Douglas	3,545	41,420	8.6%	Skagit	10,884	124,100	8.8%
Ferry	672	7,740	8.7%	Skamania	746	11,690	6.4%
Franklin	9,754	90,330	10.8%	Snohomish	52,889	789,400	6.7%
Garfield	170	2,200	7.7%	Spokane	50,710	499,800	10.1%
Grant	10,871	95,630	11.4%	Stevens	3,979	44,510	8.9%
Grays Harbor	9,748	72,970	13.4%	Thurston	25,586	276,900	9.2%
Island	4,086	82,790	4.9%	Wahkiakum	328	4,030	8.1%
Jefferson	1,823	31,360	5.8%	Walla Walla	5,325	61,400	8.7%
King	100,033	2,153,700	4.6%	Whatcom	13,189	216,300	6.1%
Kitsap	18,110	264,300	6.9%	Whitman	1,709	48,640	3.5%
Kittitas	2,559	44,730	5.7%	Yakima	35,595	253,000	14.1%
Klickitat	1,713	21,660	7.9%				
State Total⁴	564,598	7,310,300	7.7%				

⁴ Not including parents who lived out of the state or not reported.

Percentage of Total Population with a DCS Case by County, June 2017 Snapshot

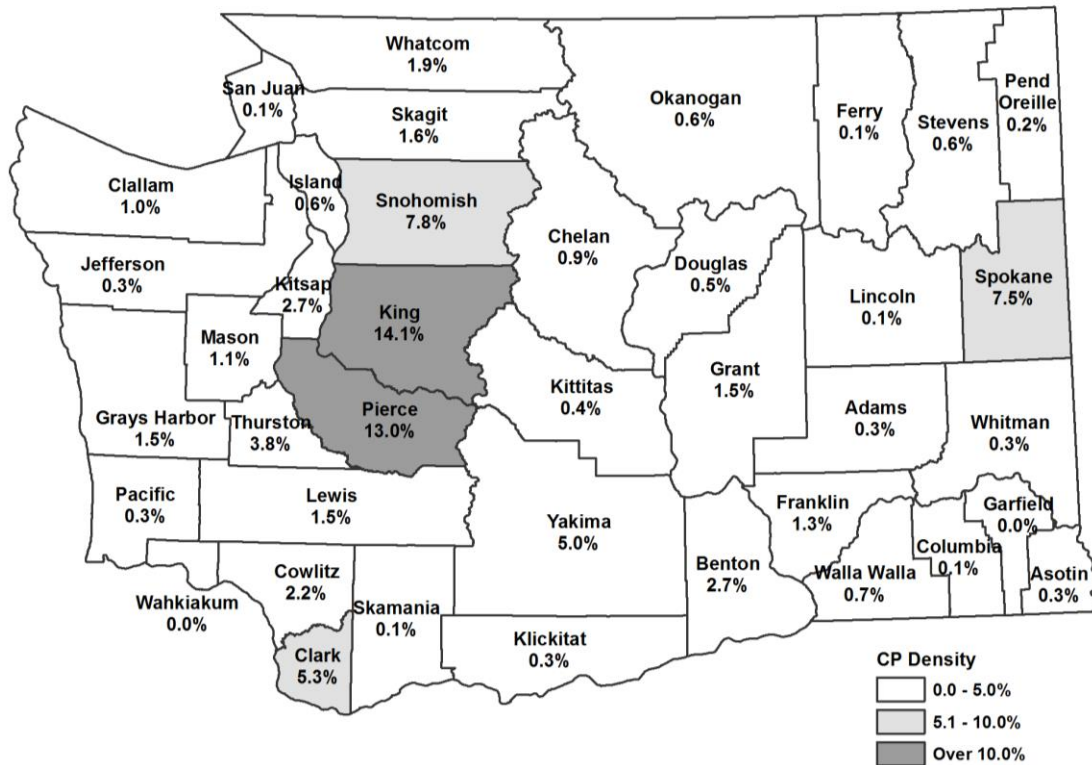
Percentage of Residents Served by DCS During June 2017



Note: The percentage of residents served is obtained by dividing the number of DCS clients in a county during June 2017 by the OFM 2017 County Population estimate.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Jan. 2022

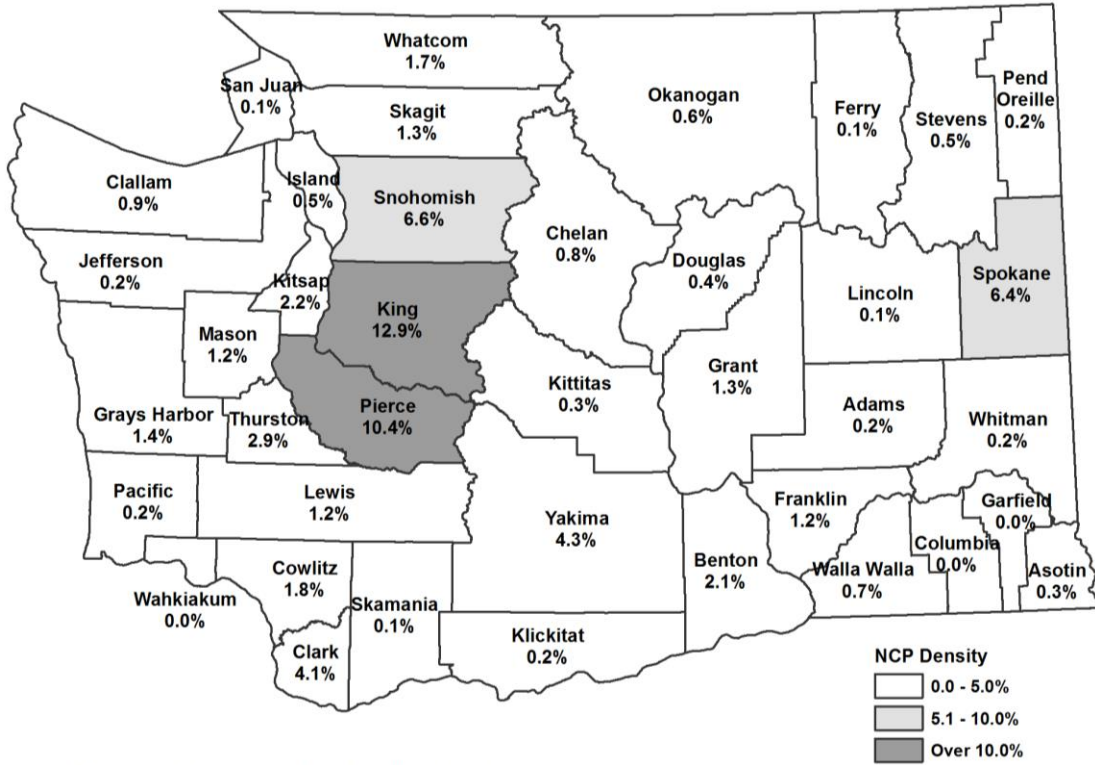
Percentage of Custodial Parents by County, June 2017 Snapshot



Note: 17.6% of CPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2017

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County, June 2017 Snapshot



Note: 30.7% of NCPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2017

Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2017

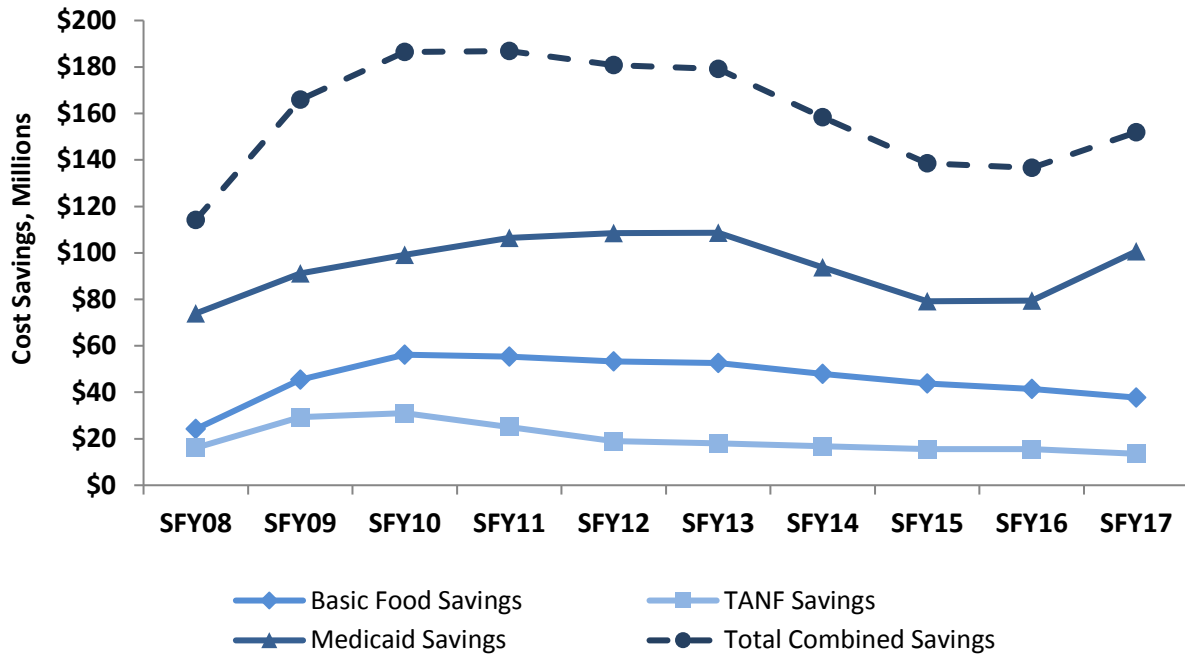
SFY 2017	Basic Food			TANF		
	Average CR ⁵ Basic Food Expenditure	Average CI ⁶ Basic Food Expenditure	Total Basic Food Savings	Average CR ⁵ TANF Expenditure	Average CI ⁶ TANF Expenditure	Total TANF Savings
July	\$85.9	\$139.1	\$3,132,943	\$7.0	\$26.4	\$1,164,630
August	\$86.1	\$139.8	\$3,121,819	\$7.0	\$27.0	\$1,175,894
September	\$84.8	\$139.3	\$3,104,032	\$6.7	\$26.4	\$1,148,345
October	\$84.1	\$139.3	\$3,183,804	\$6.7	\$27.1	\$1,216,655
November	\$83.2	\$138.6	\$3,172,119	\$6.7	\$26.5	\$1,158,916
December	\$82.2	\$137.2	\$3,113,739	\$6.4	\$26.2	\$1,148,908
January	\$81.9	\$136.6	\$3,131,681	\$6.5	\$26.1	\$1,146,845
February	\$81.3	\$137.1	\$3,196,663	\$6.3	\$25.7	\$1,123,891
March	\$80.9	\$134.6	\$3,180,672	\$6.7	\$24.7	\$1,076,489
April	\$80.3	\$134.0	\$3,157,983	\$6.4	\$24.2	\$1,074,512
May	\$79.3	\$133.1	\$3,175,696	\$6.2	\$24.2	\$1,078,061
June	\$79.0	\$131.6	\$3,096,566	\$6.2	\$23.5	\$1,034,723
Total			\$37,767,714			\$13,547,868

SFY 2017	Medicaid		
	Total Custodial Parent Medicaid Savings	Total Child Medicaid Savings	Total Medicaid Savings
July	\$3,558,755	\$4,737,327	\$8,296,082
August	\$3,729,478	\$5,446,188	\$9,175,666
September	\$3,632,365	\$5,261,973	\$8,894,338
October	\$3,477,767	\$5,370,100	\$8,847,868
November	\$3,215,014	\$5,293,971	\$8,508,985
December	\$3,355,081	\$4,691,609	\$8,046,691
January	\$3,509,149	\$4,670,868	\$8,180,017
February	\$3,566,102	\$4,245,253	\$7,811,355
March	\$3,348,199	\$4,891,149	\$8,239,349
April	\$3,933,031	\$4,825,329	\$8,758,360
May	\$3,560,890	\$4,662,175	\$8,223,065
June	\$3,434,305	\$4,179,131	\$7,613,436
Total	\$42,320,136	\$58,275,073	\$100,595,212

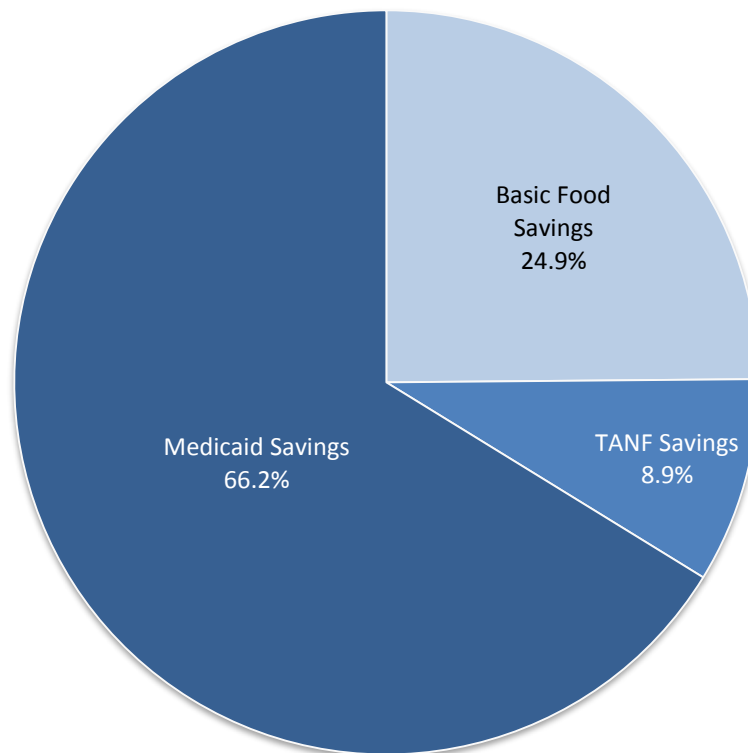
⁵ CR: Custodial parents with regular child support payments. Regular child support payments are defined as summed monthly order amount more than \$0 and summed total arrearage debt less than twice the summed monthly order amount.

⁶ CI: Custodial parents without regular child support payments.

Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2008 – SFY 2017



Sources of \$151.9 Million in Child Support Cost Avoidance, SFY 2017



Child Support Demographics, June 2017 Snapshot

Characteristic	Noncustodial Parents ⁷		Custodial Parents ⁸		Children	
	# of NCPs	Percent	# of CPs	Percent	# of Children	Percent
Total	234,913	100.0%	257,624	100.0%	270,241	100.0%

Gender	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
Female	36,752	15.6%	227,328	88.2%	132,928	49.2%
Male	197,813	84.2%	29,066	11.3%	137,195	50.8%
Unknown	348	0.1%	1,230	0.5%	118	0.0%

Age of Parent	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
<26 Years Old	12,833	5.5%	16,438	6.4%		
26 – 35 Years Old	72,658	30.9%	79,275	30.8%		
36 – 45 Years Old	85,377	36.3%	87,761	34.1%		
46 – 55 Years Old	48,659	20.7%	48,878	19.0%		
56+ Years Old	13,735	5.8%	24,140	9.4%		
Not Reported/ Unidentifiable	1,651	0.7%	1,132	0.4%		

Age of Children	Children	
<6 Year Old	52,438	19.4%
6 – 10 Years Old	82,529	30.5%
11 – 15 Years Old	88,498	32.7%
16 – 18 Years Old	41,237	15.3%
19+ Years Old	5,395	2.0%
Not Reported/ Unidentifiable	144	0.1%

Years	Noncustodial Parents	Custodial Parents	Children
Mean Age	40.1	40.9	10.7
Median Age	39.2	39.2	10.9

⁷ A noncustodial parent (NCP) may also be a custodial parent on another case.

⁸ A custodial parent may also be an NCP on another case.

Special Grant/Projects

- Families Forward Demonstration (FFD) - DCS, along with child support agencies located in Colorado, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, are working with MDRC and local service providers on the Families Forward Demonstration (FFD) project. The opportunity was made available by MDRC through a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. FFD is intended to rigorously test new strategies to improve the earnings capacity, skills, and financial literacy of low-income parents who owe child support but are unable to fully meet their obligations due to low earnings. The goal of this five-year project is to identify effective employment-focused approaches that can be integrated into child support programs across the country. The project seeks to improve the earnings capacity of noncustodial parents, thereby increasing their ability to make reliable child support payments and improving the economic well-being of their children. Half of the program participants will receive in-demand occupational skills training, financial coaching, and responsive child support services. The remaining half will be in the control group as part of the research study. The planning phase of the FFD project is expected to last into late 2017 or early 2018, with the pilot project up and running by spring 2018.
- Strength in Families (SIF) – DCS is a project partner with the state Department of Corrections (DOC), which in October 2015 was awarded a five-year Responsible Fatherhood Opportunities for Reentry and Mobility (ReFORM) Grant by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF). In October of 2016, DOC officially renamed Washington’s ReFORM project the Strength in Families (SIF) project. SIF supports parents, as well as their children age birth to 24, who are reentering communities following incarceration. The primary areas of focus are responsible parenting, economic stability and mobility, and healthy marriages or partner relationships. The project is serving eligible individuals returning to Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, and Thurston Counties from five DOC facilities. DCS, through the Alternative Solutions Program, is a project partner. Through this project, DCS NCPs receive action plans, which may include working with community partners who can help with employment, housing, food, medical, and legal resources upon release. Alternative Solutions is providing DCS direct services to help lower monthly payments or reduce state debts, make referrals to the Employment Pipeline program, and help with license reinstatement and other enforcement actions.
- Behavioral Interventions for Child Support Services (BICS) – In September 2014, DCS was awarded two five-year Behavioral Interventions for Child Support Services (BICS) Grants from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement to test pilot projects that apply behavioral economics to child support services. Within the child support system, behavioral economics provides insight into how structural and behavioral process bottlenecks might influence a paying parent’s fulfillment of their monthly obligation. A total of eight states/districts were awarded BICS Demonstration Grants to test behaviorally informed interventions that seek to improve child support outcomes. The BICS Evaluation Grant manages and provides technical assistance and evaluation services for the eight BICS Grantees. DCS was selected as the sole agency to receive this larger, overarching grant award. The Seattle DCS Field Office piloted the first intervention under Washington’s BICS Demonstration Grant. This pilot project focused on testing behaviorally informed communication strategies in an effort to increase the early engagement of paying parents in the administrative order establishment process. This pilot project began in May 2016, and enrollment ended in July

2017. Project staff will continue to apply the intervention components to all treatment cases and track the results through the end of October, and evaluators will continue to track data on the completed sample for an additional 24 months. The second BICS pilot involves the Everett DCS Field Office. This pilot, which was launched at the end of November 2017, is targeting payment behavior immediately after an order is final.

- The Alternative Solutions Program – This program is a statewide initiative implemented by DCS in July 2014 to assist noncustodial parents struggling to meet their child support obligations. The program connects these parents to community resources that can help them remove barriers to paying child support, such as work-related training, education, and supportive services. Between July 2014 and October 2017 the voluntary program received 2,431 referrals, and of those who actively engaged, 372 NCPs were steered to employment. The program has been embraced by parents, field staff, prosecuting attorney staff, and community partners. This cooperative effort is already generating real-life success stories as parents reach their full human potential.

Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments and Genetic Testing

Voluntary Paternity Program Background

The Washington State Paternity Acknowledgment Program began in July 1989 as a partnership between the Division of Child Support (DCS) and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). The program provides cooperative unmarried parents the opportunity to sign a Paternity Acknowledgment at the child's birth or a later date. Most Paternity Acknowledgments are signed at a birthing hospital. Based on its success of increasing paternity establishment using the voluntary acknowledgment and its cost effectiveness, Washington's program was soon recognized as a national best practice. In the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Congress required that every state implement a voluntary paternity establishment program based on Washington State's model.

Legal Requirements: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) created numerous state requirements, including the requirement that states afford all unmarried parents the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge paternity. Section 45CFR 303.5 (g) provides the applicable federal regulations; RCW 70.58.080 and Chapter 26.26 RCW are the applicable state laws.

A hospital, midwife, or other authorized entity must provide an opportunity for unmarried parents to sign a Paternity Acknowledgment at the time of the child's birth. The parents are entitled to both a written statement of their rights and responsibilities (this is on the last page of the Paternity Acknowledgment form) and oral notice (a short video, 1-800 line). Upon receipt of a properly completed and notarized Paternity Acknowledgment, DOH must name the father on the birth certificate.

Effects of the Paternity Acknowledgment: A properly signed and filed Paternity Acknowledgment creates a legal determination of paternity immediately without the need for a court order. Paternity for a child of unmarried parents must be determined before we can establish a child support order determining the noncustodial parent's financial and medical obligations, unless the woman who gave birth to the child is the NCP. The determination of paternity afforded by this simple administrative process also provides other benefits, such as making a child eligible to participate in any available social security, veterans', life insurance, or health insurance benefits.

Results: The signed and filed Paternity Acknowledgment allows DCS to establish a child support obligation quickly and at low cost. DCS is usually able to obtain a child support order in 90 days or less from the date DOH files the Paternity Acknowledgment, which is a much quicker and less costly process than establishing paternity through the court. DCS administrative costs total less than \$200 per case, compared to an average of \$1,350 each time DCS must establish paternity in court. As a result of the Paternity Acknowledgment Program, DCS saves taxpayers more than \$13,000,000 yearly. In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017, paternity was established for 13,769 children, 75.9% of them by Paternity Acknowledgment.

Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments and Genetic Testing (continued)

Voluntary Paternity Testing Program

DCS continues to operate the Voluntary Paternity Testing Program (VPTP), after the conclusion of the successful Bright Start demonstration grant, which operated August 1, 2005 through July 31, 2009. There were two successful strategies from the demonstration grant that previously were not part of the state's paternity program, but are now. Because Washington law requires that signatures on the Acknowledgment or Denial of Paternity, DCS pays for Notaries Public at the State's birthing hospitals, increasing the opportunity for parents to sign a Paternity Acknowledgment. DCS also offers unmarried parents no-cost genetic testing in a non-judicial setting. Through the VPTP, hospital staff can offer an application for genetic testing to unmarried parents. This gives parents the ability to confirm that they are the child's biological parents before signing an Acknowledgment.