

# Child Support Program

SFY

# 2018

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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

**Table of Contents**

Child Support Program Overview ..... 3

Child Support Program Highlights, SFY 2018 ..... 4

Child Support Incentive Scorecard, FFY 2017 and FFY 2018..... 5

Child Support Caseload, SFY 2009 – SFY 2018 ..... 6

Child Support Collections, SFY 2009 – SFY 2018 ..... 7

Clients with DCS Cases by County of Residence, June 2018 Snapshot ..... 8

Percentage of Custodial Parents by County, June 2018 Snapshot ..... 10

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County, June 2018 Snapshot ..... 11

Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2018 ..... 12

Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2009 – SFY 2018 ..... 13

Child Support Demographics, June 2018 Snapshot ..... 14

Special Grants/Projects ..... 15

Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments and Genetic Testing ..... 17

## 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.

Additional information for this program, including the eligibility criteria, funding sources, and services/benefits provided, is available here.

### TECHNICAL NOTES

**DATA SOURCES:** Data for this chapter was based on ESA Division of Child Support's Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) - September 2018 caseload. Data for incentive payments are provided by the DCS Fiscal Office.

#### DATA NOTE:

- Percentages may not add up to expected totals due to rounding.

## Child Support Program Highlights, SFY 2018

The average monthly child support caseload was 326,923 in SFY 2018, representing a 2.1% decrease from 334,027 in SFY 2017. Within this caseload, average monthly *Current Assistance* cases decreased by 6.4% from 31,706 in SFY 2017 to 29,677 in SFY 2018; *Former Assistance* cases decreased by 2.6% from 184,086 to 179,364; and *Never Assistance* cases decreased by 0.3% from 118,236 to 117,883.

- The child support program collected a total of \$672.5 million in SFY 2018.
- The total cost avoidance was \$144.1 million. Of the total, \$95 million (65.9%) was for the Medicaid program; \$36.1 million (25.1%) was for the Basic Food program and 13 million (9.0%) was for the TANF program.
- The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) reported 26,710 births to unmarried mothers. Of these births, DOH reports that 20,826 (78.0%) 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 Washington State's Paternity Acknowledgment Program.

## Child Support Incentive<sup>1</sup> Scorecard, FFY 2017<sup>2</sup> and FFY 2018<sup>3</sup>

Measure	Goal Needed to Obtain 100% Funding	Actual Performance		Estimated Percentage of Maximum Incentive Reached	
		2017	2018	2017	2018
<b>Paternity Establishment Percentage</b>	80%	98.7%	98.0%	100%	100%
<b>Support Order Establishment</b>	80%	93.3%	93.3%	100%	100%
<b>Current Collections</b>	80%	66.9%	67.4%	76%	77%
<b>Arrearage Collections</b>	80%	61.9%	62.1%	71%	72%
<b>Cost Effectiveness</b>	5.00	4.27	4.21	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.

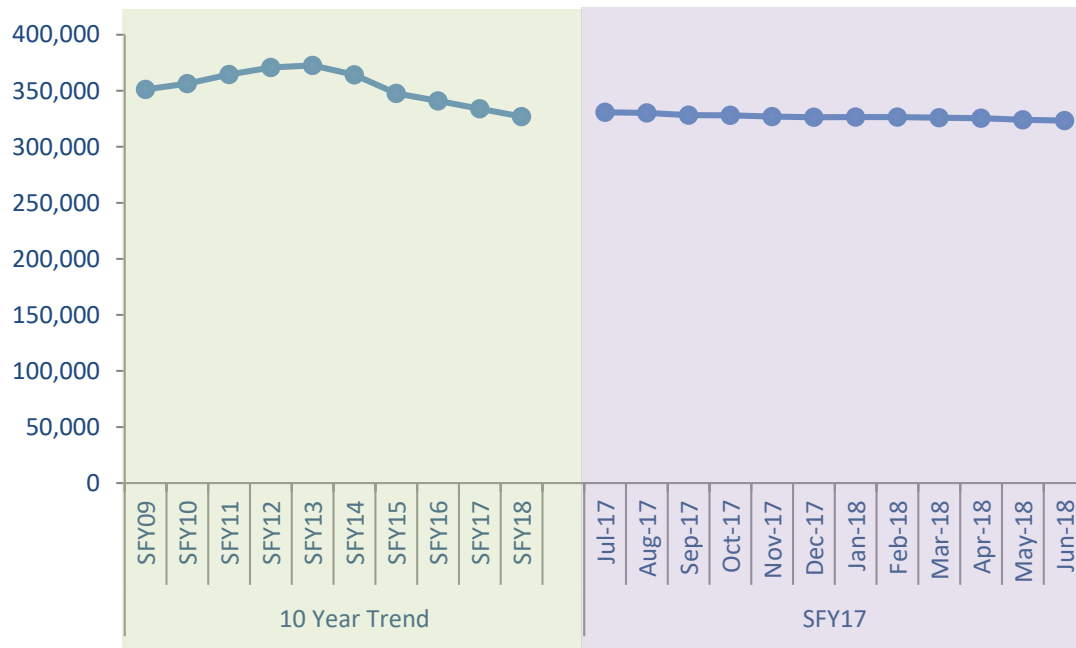
**Cost-effectiveness:** Total IV-D dollars collected divided by total IV-D dollars expended.

<sup>1</sup> 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. DCS incentive payments for FFY 2018 are based on DCS actual FFY 2018 performance and OCSE FFY 2018 preliminary performance results for all other states. Data source: DCS Fiscal Office.

<sup>2</sup> FFY 2017 data is from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) 2017 Preliminary Report.

<sup>3</sup> FFY 2018 data is preliminary based on unaudited federal reports.

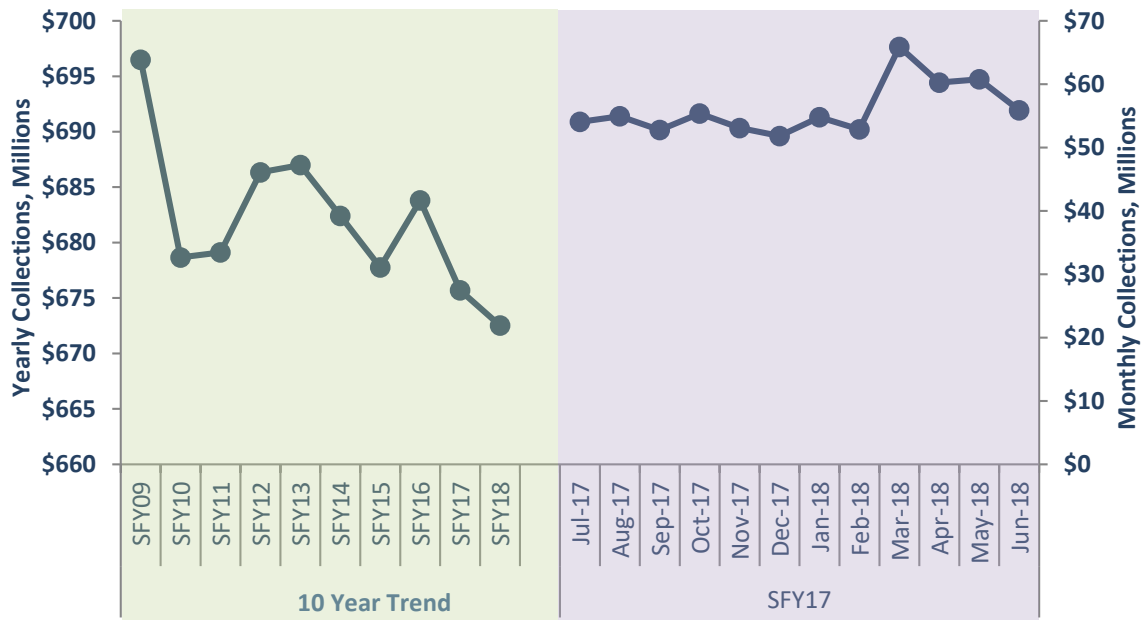
### Child Support Caseload, SFY 2009 – SFY 2018



SFY	Monthly Average Caseload	SFY	Monthly Average Caseload
SFY09	351,315	SFY14	364,295
SFY10	356,436	SFY15	347,740
SFY11	364,535	SFY16	340,919
SFY12	370,830	SFY17	334,027
SFY13	372,701	SFY18	326,923

SFY 2018	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Caseload
July	30,455	181,758	118,622	330,835
August	29,638	182,188	118,374	330,200
September	30,247	180,635	117,402	328,284
October	30,087	180,570	117,489	328,146
November	29,755	179,944	117,347	327,046
December	30,009	179,125	117,346	326,480
January	30,021	178,946	117,546	326,513
February	29,582	179,053	117,958	326,593
March	29,274	178,585	118,066	325,925
April	29,306	178,103	118,088	325,497
May	28,942	177,040	118,199	324,181
June	28,802	176,415	118,156	323,373
Mo. Avg.	29,677	179,364	117,883	326,923

## Child Support Collections, SFY 2009 – SFY 2018



SFY	Collections	SFY	Collections
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
SFY13	\$686,994,705	SFY18	\$672,521,073

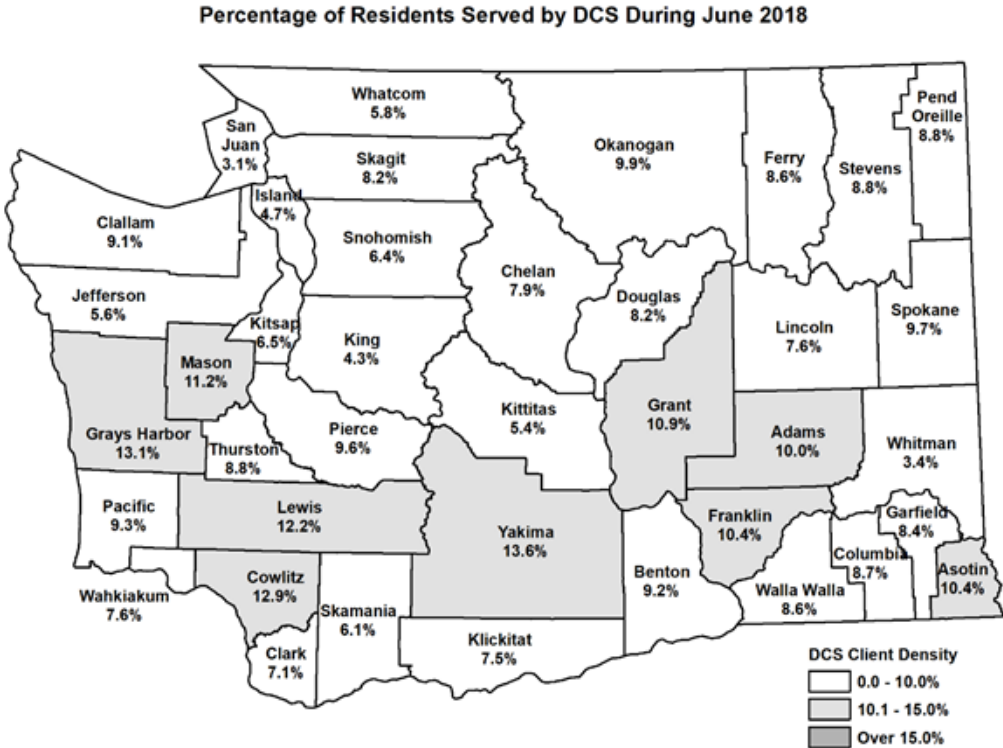
SFY 2018	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Collections
July	\$1,656,660	\$19,758,449	\$32,639,487	\$54,054,597
August	\$1,681,528	\$20,233,337	\$33,025,870	\$54,940,734
September	\$1,649,572	\$19,167,206	\$31,952,332	\$52,769,111
October	\$1,710,997	\$20,196,770	\$33,466,775	\$55,374,542
November	\$1,594,173	\$19,165,643	\$32,331,778	\$53,091,595
December	\$1,477,601	\$18,487,578	\$31,854,055	\$51,819,234
January	\$1,623,130	\$19,531,759	\$33,632,297	\$54,787,187
February	\$1,611,382	\$18,786,530	\$32,476,459	\$52,874,371
March	\$2,607,747	\$25,853,243	\$37,427,898	\$65,888,888
April	\$2,085,084	\$22,720,261	\$35,453,606	\$60,258,951
May	\$1,930,262	\$22,454,799	\$36,389,701	\$60,774,763
June	\$1,773,877	\$20,331,681	\$33,781,544	\$55,887,102
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,402,014</b>	<b>\$246,687,257</b>	<b>\$404,431,803</b>	<b>\$672,521,073</b>

## Clients with DCS Cases by County of Residence, June 2018 Snapshot

County	Clients	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served	County	Clients	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served
Adams	2,005	20,020	10.0%	Lewis	9,547	78,380	12.2%
Asotin	2,324	22,420	10.4%	Lincoln	826	10,810	7.6%
Benton	18,089	197,420	9.2%	Mason	7,182	64,020	11.2%
Chelan	6,164	77,800	7.9%	Okanogan	4,195	42,490	9.9%
Clallam	6,835	75,130	9.1%	Pacific	1,992	21,420	9.3%
Clark	34,230	479,500	7.1%	Pend Oreille	1,195	13,540	8.8%
Columbia	359	4,150	8.7%	Pierce	84,154	872,220	9.6%
Cowlitz	13,831	107,310	12.9%	San Juan	529	16,810	3.1%
Douglas	3,464	42,120	8.2%	Skagit	10,406	126,520	8.2%
Ferry	670	7,780	8.6%	Skamania	730	11,890	6.1%
Franklin	9,669	92,540	10.4%	Snohomish	51,344	805,120	6.4%
Garfield	185	2,210	8.4%	Spokane	49,515	507,950	9.7%
Grant	10,593	97,350	10.9%	Stevens	3,974	45,030	8.8%
Grays Harbor	9,662	73,610	13.1%	Thurston	24,811	281,700	8.8%
Island	3,983	83,860	4.7%	Wahkiakum	310	4,100	7.6%
Jefferson	1,772	31,590	5.6%	Walla Walla	5,308	61,800	8.6%
King	94,990	2,190,200	4.3%	Whatcom	12,698	220,350	5.8%
Kitsap	17,369	267,120	6.5%	Whitman	1,676	49,210	3.4%
Kittitas	2,475	45,600	5.4%	Yakima	34,498	254,500	13.6%
Klickitat	1,639	21,980	7.5%				
<b>State Total</b>	<b>545,198</b>	<b>7,427,570</b>	<b>7.3%</b>				



# Percentage of Total Population with a DCS Case by County, June 2018 Snapshot

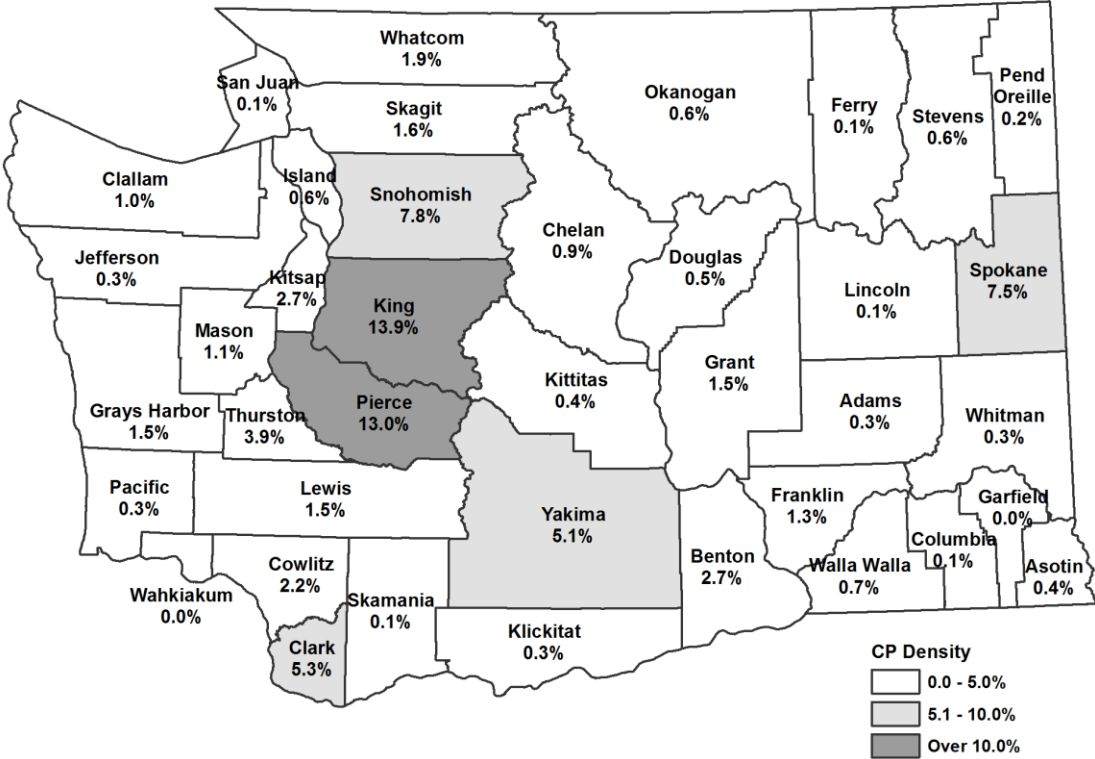


Note: The percentage of residents served is obtained by dividing the number of DCS clients in a county during June 2018 by the OFM 2018 County Population estimate.

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

# Percentage of Custodial Parents by County, June 2018 Snapshot

Percentage of Custodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2018

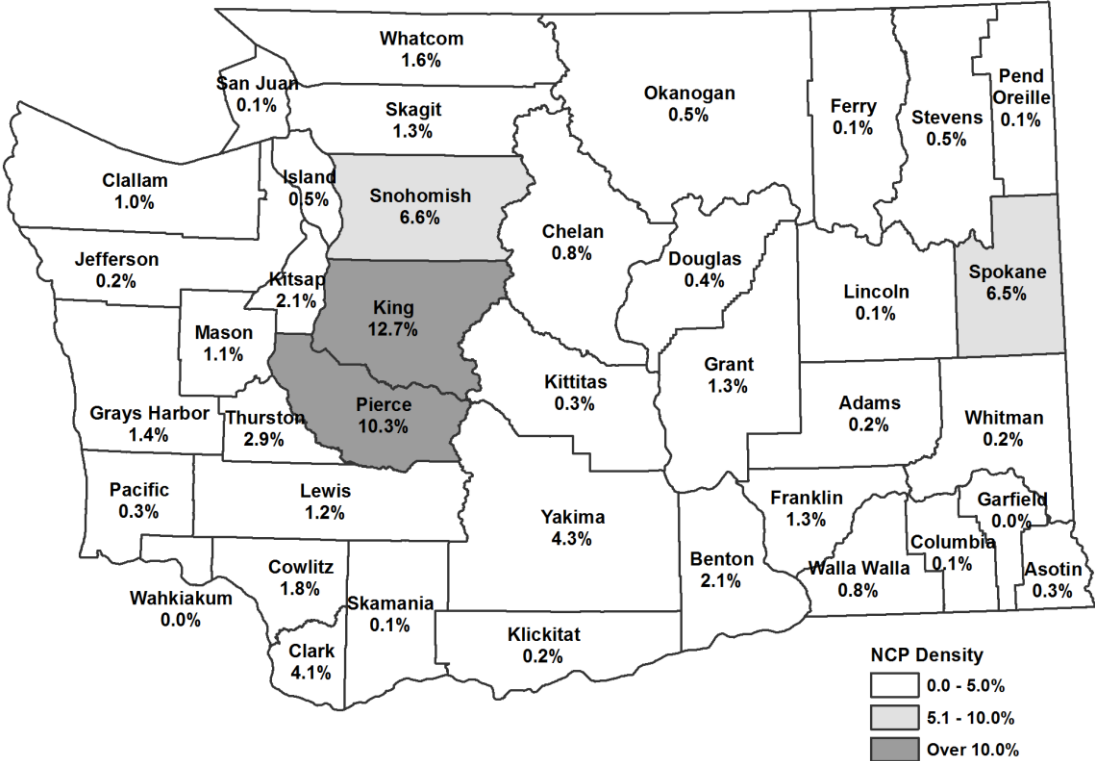


Note: 17.6% of CPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2018

# Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County, June 2018 Snapshot

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2018



Note: 30.5% of NCPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2018

## Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2018

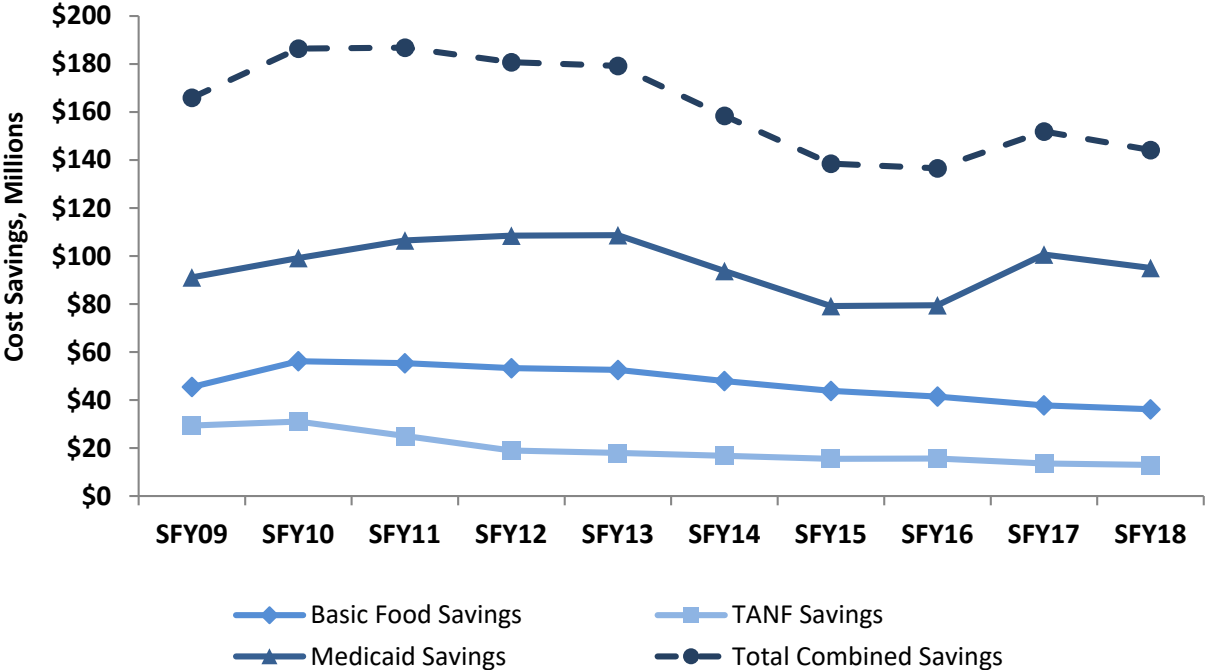
SFY 2018	Basic Food			TANF		
	Average CR <sup>4</sup> Basic Food Expenditure	Average CI <sup>5</sup> Basic Food Expenditure	Total Basic Food Savings	Average CR <sup>5</sup> TANF Expenditure	Average CI <sup>6</sup> TANF Expenditure	Total TANF Savings
July	\$79.50	\$130.64	\$2,993,150	\$6.03	\$23.11	\$1,024,402
August	\$79.29	\$130.27	\$2,942,424	\$6.07	\$24.03	\$1,070,649
September	\$78.91	\$130.61	\$2,980,265	\$5.68	\$23.62	\$1,078,554
October	\$77.41	\$128.85	\$3,013,144	\$5.85	\$23.84	\$1,103,988
November	\$76.43	\$128.54	\$3,011,991	\$5.59	\$23.24	\$1,052,082
December	\$75.75	\$127.88	\$2,980,068	\$5.66	\$23.82	\$1,081,086
January	\$74.89	\$127.16	\$3,053,814	\$5.73	\$24.06	\$1,101,882
February	\$74.54	\$127.17	\$3,072,990	\$5.58	\$24.34	\$1,120,847
March	\$74.10	\$125.00	\$3,018,779	\$5.74	\$23.75	\$1,100,215
April	\$73.34	\$124.33	\$3,059,134	\$5.93	\$23.73	\$1,093,262
May	\$72.67	\$123.60	\$3,045,839	\$5.88	\$23.99	\$1,106,057
June	\$71.73	\$121.95	\$2,973,056	\$5.65	\$23.21	\$1,055,493
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$36,144,654</b>			<b>\$12,988,517</b>

SFY 2018	Medicaid		
	Total Custodial Parent Medicaid Savings	Total Child Medicaid Savings	Total Medicaid Savings
July	\$3,624,883	\$4,253,425	\$7,878,308
August	\$3,589,141	\$4,372,691	\$7,961,832
September	\$3,574,013	\$4,375,523	\$7,949,536
October	\$3,924,514	\$4,367,030	\$8,291,543
November	\$3,264,172	\$5,131,338	\$8,395,510
December	\$3,132,493	\$4,227,405	\$7,359,898
January	\$3,434,690	\$4,842,388	\$8,277,078
February	\$3,123,122	\$4,778,992	\$7,902,115
March	\$3,427,447	\$4,967,930	\$8,395,377
April	\$3,465,174	\$4,489,189	\$7,954,363
May	\$3,246,716	\$4,131,712	\$7,378,428
June	\$3,068,286	\$4,202,390	\$7,270,676
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$40,874,651</b>	<b>\$54,140,013</b>	<b>\$95,014,664</b>

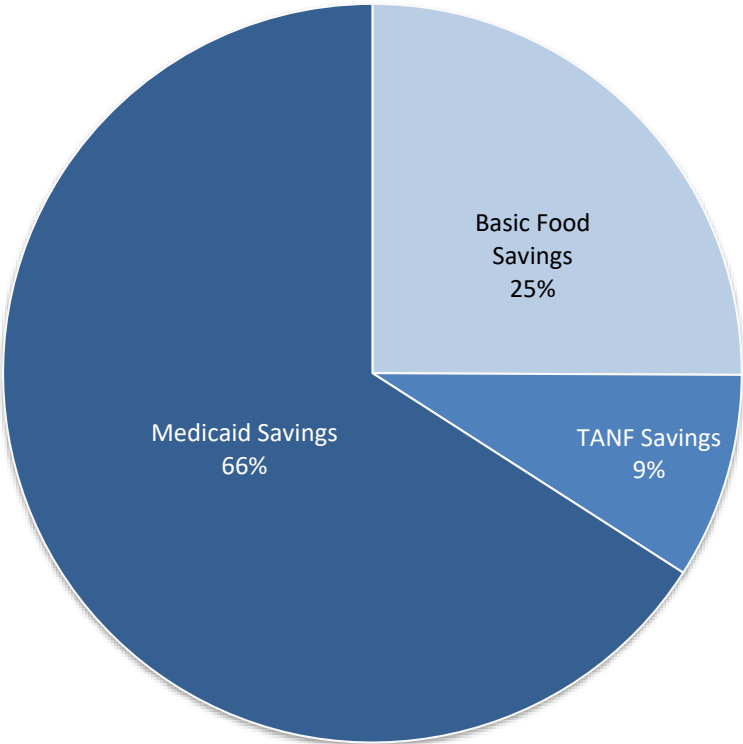
<sup>4</sup> CR: Custodial parents with regular child support payments. Regular child support payments are defined as summed monthly order amount more than \$0 and summed total arrearage debt less than twice the summed monthly order amount.

<sup>5</sup> CI: Custodial parents without regular child support payments.

### Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2009 – SFY 2018



Sources of \$144.1 Million in Child Support Cost Avoidance, SFY 2018



## Child Support Demographics, June 2018 Snapshot

Characteristic	Noncustodial Parents <sup>6</sup>		Custodial Parents <sup>7</sup>		Children	
	# of NCPs	Percent	# of CPs	Percent	# of Children	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>228,862</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>251,551</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>260,060</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Gender	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
<b>Female</b>	36,159	15.8%	221,993	88.2%	127,964	49.2%
<b>Male</b>	192,403	84.1%	28,446	11.3%	131,998	50.8%
<b>Unknown</b>	300	0.1%	1,112	0.4%	98	0.0%

Age of Parent	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
<b>&lt;26 Years Old</b>	10,981	4.8%	14,096	5.6%	N/A	
<b>26 – 35 Years Old</b>	69,255	30.3%	75,729	30.1%		
<b>36 – 45 Years Old</b>	84,879	37.1%	87,566	34.8%		
<b>46 – 55 Years Old</b>	47,927	20.9%	48,185	19.2%		
<b>56+ Years Old</b>	14,283	6.2%	24,950	9.9%		
<b>Not Reported/ Unidentifiable</b>	1,537	0.7%	1,025	0.4%		

Age of Children	Children	
<b>&lt;6 Year Old</b>	48,793	18.8%
<b>6 – 10 Years Old</b>	78,144	30.0%
<b>11 – 15 Years Old</b>	88,703	34.1%
<b>16 – 18 Years Old</b>	39,154	15.1%
<b>19+ Years Old</b>	5,168	2.0%
<b>Not Reported/ Unidentifiable</b>	98	0.0%

Years	Noncustodial Parents	Custodial Parents	Children
<b>Mean Age</b>	41.3	40.3	10.8
<b>Median Age</b>	39.5	39.5	11.0

<sup>6</sup> A noncustodial parent (NCP) may also be a custodial parent (CP) on another case.

<sup>7</sup> A CP may also be an NCP on another case.

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## Special Grants/Projects

- **Families Forward Washington (FFW)** – DCS, along with child support agencies located in Michigan, New York, and Ohio are working with MDRC and local service providers on the Families Forward Demonstration project. The opportunity was made available by MDRC through a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. DCS's project, Families Forward Washington (FFW), 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 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. FFW will provide in-demand occupational skills training, career counseling, job development and retention services, and responsive child support services to noncustodial parents residing in Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties. Recruitment began in November, 2018. NCPs that successfully enroll in FFW will start free occupational training classes in January, 2019.
- **Strength in Families (SIF)** – DCS is a project partner with the state Department of Corrections (DOC) on the Responsible Fatherhood Opportunities for Reentry and Mobility (ReFORM) grant project. The grant was awarded to DOC by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in October, 2015. In October of 2016, DOC officially renamed Washington's ReFORM project the Strength in Families (SIF) project. SIF supports parents, 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. Program participants 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 program NCPs to help lower monthly payments or reduce state debts, 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 (OCSE) 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. The Seattle pilot, which ran from May of 2016 to July of 2017, was part of Phase I of BICS. A group of SEOs in the Seattle office tested the use of behaviorally-informed outreach during the administrative *establishment* process with a goal of increasing noncustodial parent engagement. For Phase II, a group of SEOs in the Everett office tested behaviorally-informed strategies during the early

stages of order *enforcement*. The goal of the Everett pilot was to improve communication between DCS and noncustodial parents immediately after an order became final. SEOs involved in the Everett pilot used telephone outreach, print communication, and text message reminders in order to encourage parents to make payments voluntarily until or unless wage withholding was put in place. This pilot ran through July, 2018. A third pilot is expected later this year as part of Phase III of BICS, also referred to as the Integration Phase. DCS will review the results from the BICS pilot projects and evaluate any successful components for statewide implementation.

- **The Alternative Solutions Program** – This statewide program was 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 November 2018 the voluntary program received 3,467 referrals. During the State fiscal year 2017, 1,088 parents were served, of those seeking employment 65% were successful in becoming employed, and 85% successfully connected with needed resources to address barriers. The program has been embraced by parents, field staff, prosecuting attorney staff, and community partners. This cooperative effort is 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) 2018, paternity was established for 13,466 children, 75.8% of them by Paternity Acknowledgment.

**Changes to the Uniform Parentage Act (UPA) Effective January 1, 2019:** The Washington State Legislature enacted major changes to the UPA in the spring of 2018. These changes go into effect January 1, 2019 and expand the use of the Acknowledgment to include presumed parents and intended parents, in addition to biological parents. The Paternity Acknowledgment form will be completely changed and will be now known as the Acknowledgment of Parentage. DCS in partnership with the Department of Health (DOH), Center for Health Status (CHS) will be providing training to hospitals and other providers later this year.

**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. Washington law requires notarized signatures on the Acknowledgment or Denial of Paternity. DCS reimburses hospitals for the cost to add Notaries Public, 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.