

Child Support Program

SFY

2019

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 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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 Division of Child Support (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 2019 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 2019

The average monthly child support caseload was 318,444 in SFY 2019, representing a 2.6% decrease from 326,923 in SFY 2018. Within this caseload, average monthly Current Assistance cases decreased by 2.5% from 29,677 in SFY 2018 to 28,938 in SFY 2019; Former Assistance cases decreased by 3.9% from 179,364 to 172,450; and Never Assistance cases decreased by 0.7% from 117,883 to 117,056.

- The child support program collected a total of \$666.2 million in SFY 2019.
- The total cost avoidance in SFY 2019 was \$137.3 million. Of the total, \$88.7 million (64.6%) was for the Medicaid program; \$34.4 million (25.1%) was for the Basic Food program and 14.1 million (10.3%) was for the TANF program.
- The Washington state Department of Health (DOH) reported 26,049 births to unmarried mothers. Of these births, DOH reports that 19,936 (76.53%) 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 Incentive¹ Scorecard, FFY 2018² and FFY 2019³

Measure	Goal Needed to Obtain 100% Funding	Actual Performance		Estimated Percentage of Maximum Incentive Reached	
		2018	2019	2018	2019
Paternity Establishment Percentage	80%	98.0%	97.9%	100%	100%
Support Order Establishment	80%	93.3%	93.1%	100%	100%
Current Collections	80%	67.4%	67.7%	77%	77%
Arrearage Collections	80%	62.1%	62.4%	72%	72%
Cost Effectiveness	5.00	4.21	4.08	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.

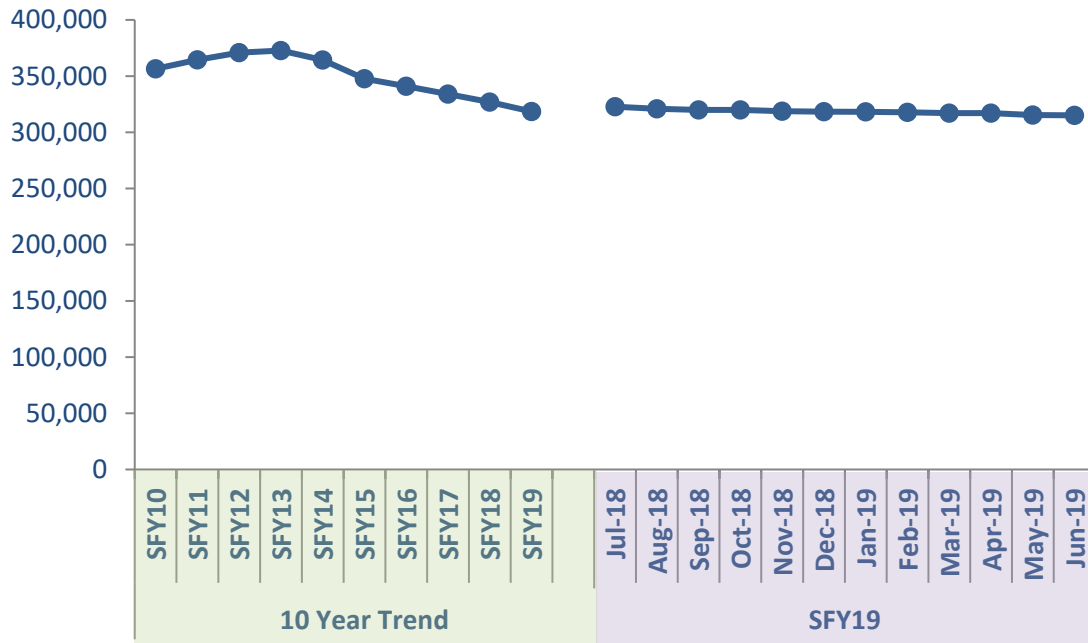
Cost-effectiveness: Total IV-D dollars collected divided by total IV-D dollars expended.

¹ DCS incentive payments for FFY 2018 are based on DCS actual FFY 2018 performance and OCSE FFY 2018 preliminary performance results for all other states. DCS incentive payments for FFY19 are based on DCS actual FFY 2019 performance and OCSE FFY 2019 preliminary performance results for all other states. Data source: DCS Fiscal Office.

² FFY 2018 data is from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) 2018 Preliminary Report.

³ FFY 2019 data is preliminary based on unaudited federal reports.

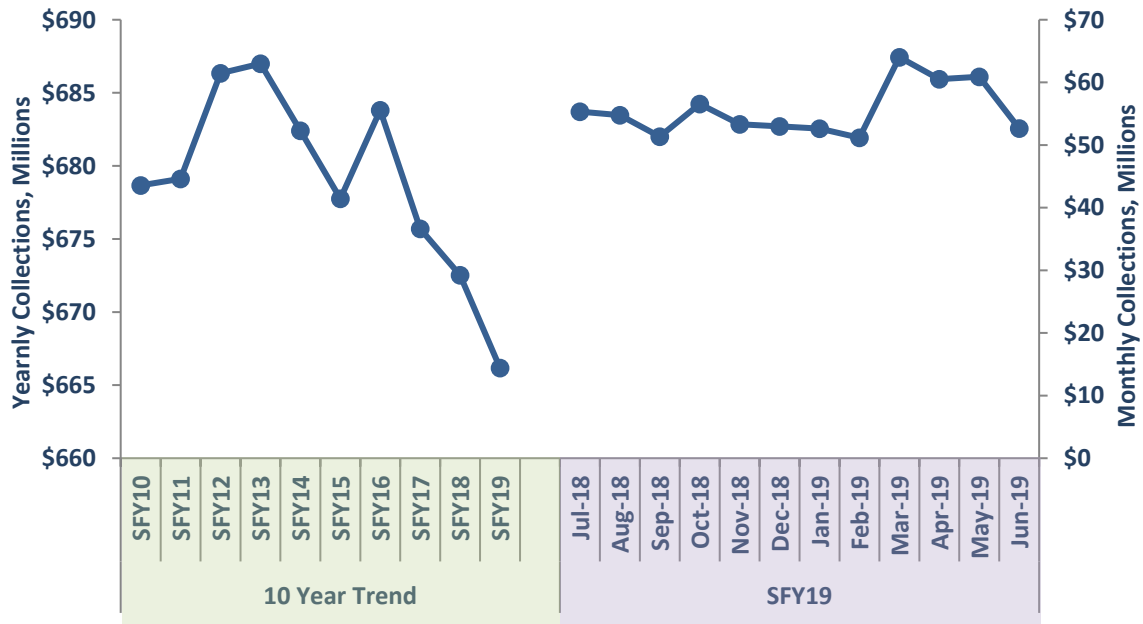
Child Support Caseload, SFY 2010 – SFY 2019



SFY	Monthly Average Caseload	SFY	Monthly Average Caseload
SFY10	356,436	SFY15	347,740
SFY11	364,535	SFY16	340,919
SFY12	370,830	SFY17	334,027
SFY13	372,701	SFY18	326,923
SFY14	364,295	SFY19	318,444

SFY 2019	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Caseload
July	29,306	175,396	118,023	322,725
August	28,913	174,756	117,194	320,863
September	29,628	173,612	116,674	319,914
October	29,099	173,920	116,942	319,961
November	29,259	172,870	116,702	318,831
December	29,396	172,239	116,711	318,346
January	29,467	171,690	116,979	318,136
February	28,781	171,918	117,121	317,820
March	28,793	171,397	116,916	317,106
April	28,538	171,429	117,163	317,130
May	28,020	170,379	116,999	315,398
June	28,052	169,790	117,252	315,094
Mo. Avg.	28,938	172,450	117,056	318,444

Child Support Collections, SFY 2010 – SFY 2019



SFY	Collections	SFY	Collections
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
SFY14	682,411,249	SFY19	666,175,348

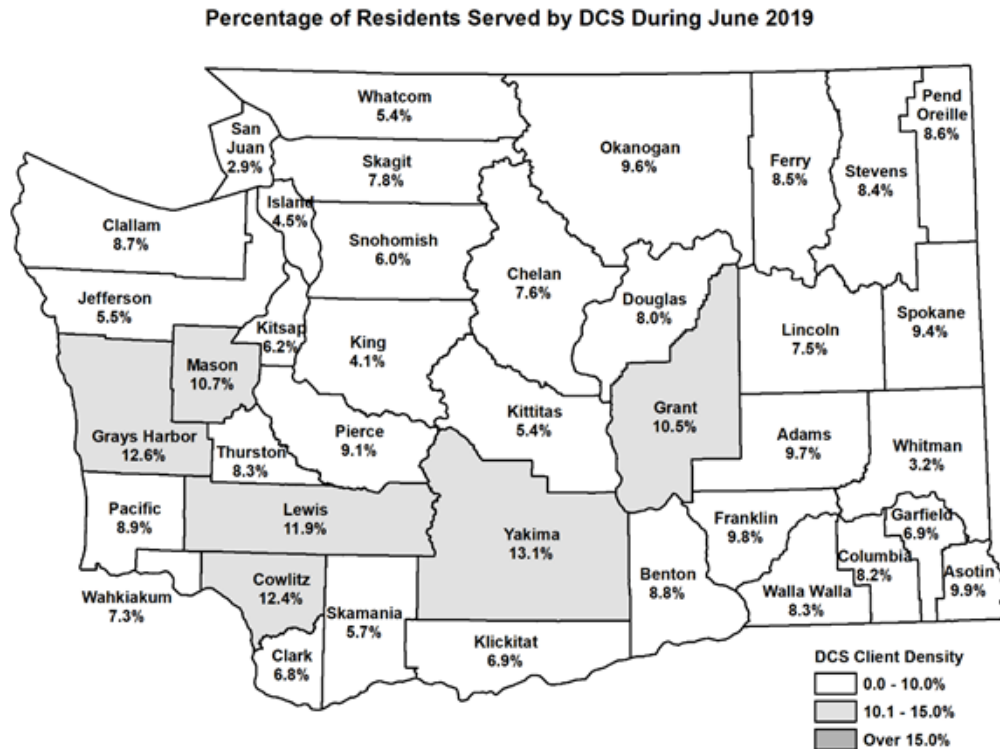
SFY 2019	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Collections
July	\$1,691,871	\$19,974,025	\$33,662,800	\$55,328,696
August	\$1,720,655	\$19,658,233	\$33,385,299	\$54,764,186
September	\$1,581,504	\$18,218,718	\$31,544,791	\$51,345,013
October	\$1,722,579	\$20,443,978	\$34,388,341	\$56,554,898
November	\$1,644,993	\$18,790,067	\$32,869,902	\$53,304,962
December	\$1,611,007	\$18,252,438	\$33,113,301	\$52,976,746
January	\$1,697,415	\$18,121,021	\$32,814,432	\$52,632,868
February	\$1,554,943	\$17,814,028	\$31,792,171	\$51,161,141
March	\$2,490,313	\$24,043,363	\$37,488,220	\$64,021,895
April	\$2,151,511	\$22,172,007	\$36,198,833	\$60,522,351
May	\$2,003,918	\$22,216,085	\$36,682,836	\$60,902,839
June	\$1,581,328	\$18,283,775	\$32,794,650	\$52,659,752
Total	\$21,452,036	\$237,987,736	\$406,735,576	\$666,175,348

Clients with DCS Cases by County of Residence, June 2019 Snapshot⁴

County	Clients	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served	County	Clients	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served
Adams	1,961	20,150	9.7%	Lewis	9,445	79,480	11.9%
Asotin	2,227	22,520	9.9%	Lincoln	827	10,960	7.5%
Benton	17,737	201,800	8.8%	Mason	6,949	64,980	10.7%
Chelan	5,977	78,420	7.6%	Okanogan	4,122	42,730	9.6%
Clallam	6,637	76,010	8.7%	Pacific	1,924	21,640	8.9%
Clark	33,215	488,500	6.8%	Pend Oreille	1,183	13,740	8.6%
Columbia	341	4,160	8.2%	Pierce	81,022	888,300	9.1%
Cowlitz	13,564	108,950	12.4%	San Juan	503	17,150	2.9%
Douglas	3,409	42,820	8.0%	Skagit	10,133	129,200	7.8%
Ferry	662	7,830	8.5%	Skamania	690	12,060	5.7%
Franklin	9,301	94,680	9.8%	Snohomish	49,319	818,700	6.0%
Garfield	153	2,220	6.9%	Spokane	48,341	515,250	9.4%
Grant	10,405	98,740	10.5%	Stevens	3,829	45,570	8.4%
Grays Harbor	9,329	74,160	12.6%	Thurston	23,844	285,800	8.3%
Island	3,854	84,820	4.5%	Wahkiakum	305	4,190	7.3%
Jefferson	1,767	31,900	5.5%	Walla Walla	5,153	62,200	8.3%
King	91,308	2,226,300	4.1%	Whatcom	12,241	225,300	5.4%
Kitsap	16,645	270,100	6.2%	Whitman	1,618	50,130	3.2%
Kittitas	2,529	46,570	5.4%	Yakima	33,626	255,950	13.1%
Klickitat	1,555	22,430	6.9%				
State Total	527,653	7,546,410	7.0%				

⁴ Population estimate source: Office of Financial Management (OFM) population estimates

Percentage of Total Population with a DCS Case by County, June 2019 Snapshot

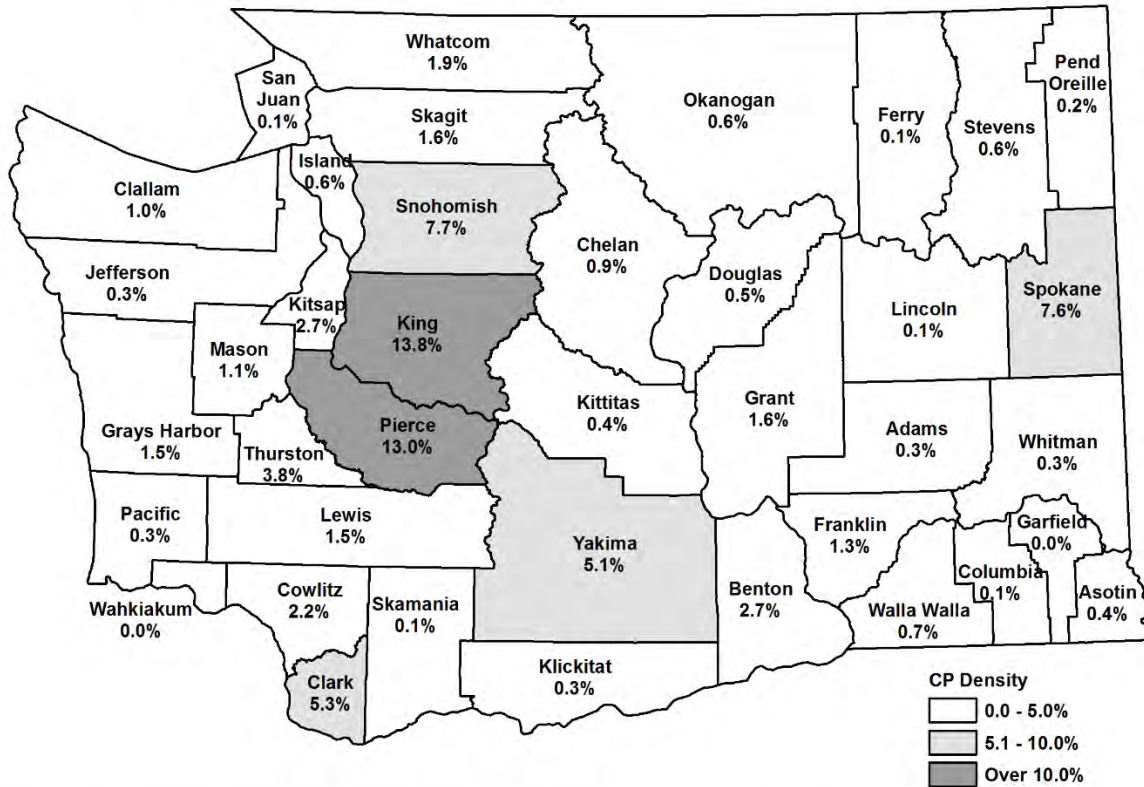


Note: The percentage of residents served is obtained by dividing the number of DCS clients in a county during June 2019 by the OFM 2019 County Population estimate.

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

Percentage of Custodial Parents (CP) by County, June 2019 Snapshot

Percentage of Custodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2019

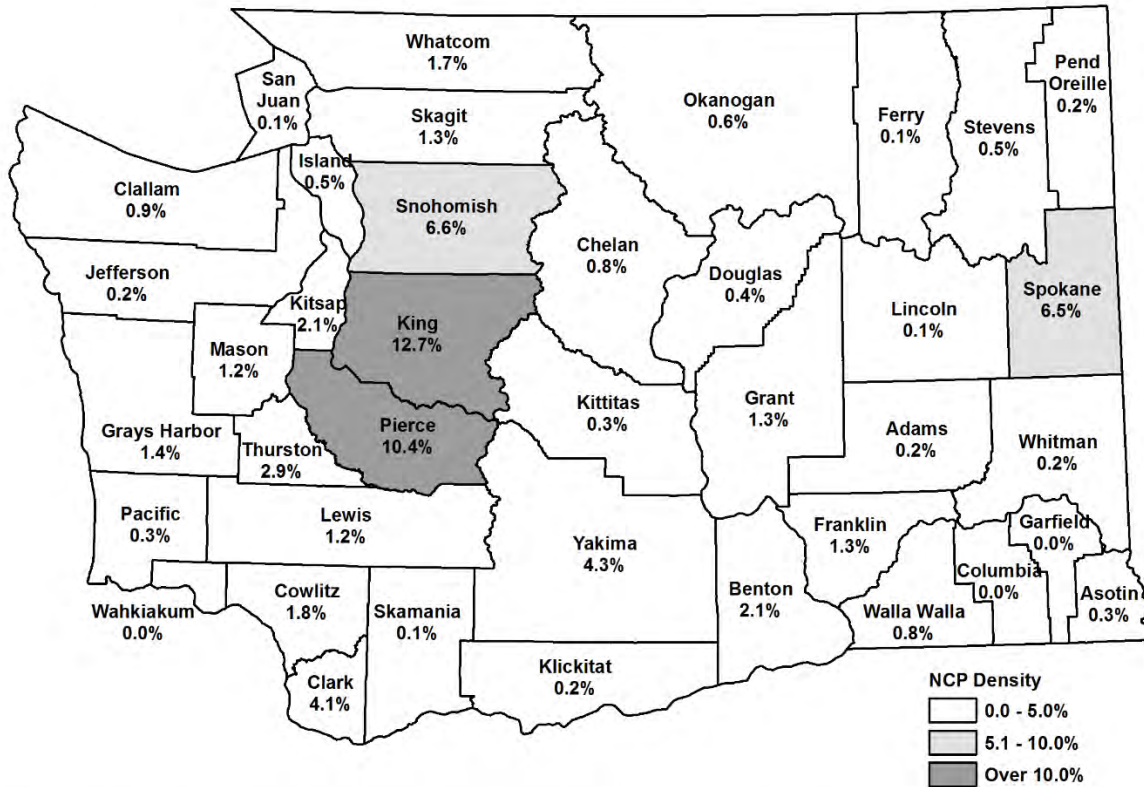


Note: 17.5% of CPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2019

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents (NCP) by County, June 2019 Snapshot

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2019



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. 2019

Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2019

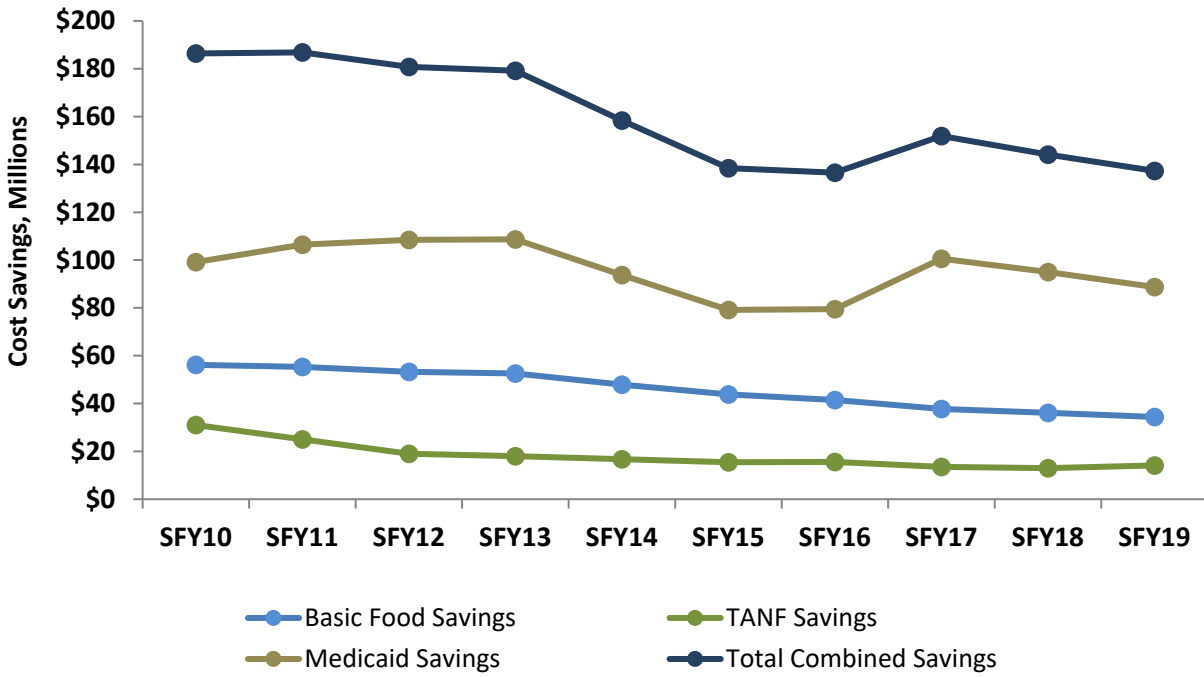
SFY 2019	Basic Food			TANF		
	Average CR ⁵ Basic Food Expenditure	Average CI ⁶ Basic Food Expenditure	Total Basic Food Savings	Average CR ⁵ TANF Expenditure	Average CI ⁶ TANF Expenditure	Total TANF Savings
July	\$71.77	\$120.33	\$2,916,087	\$6.33	\$25.47	\$1,164,958
August	\$71.89	\$120.49	\$2,863,515	\$6.35	\$26.11	\$1,185,351
September	\$71.77	\$120.41	\$2,834,634	\$6.25	\$26.20	\$1,188,652
October	\$71.87	\$121.26	\$2,902,339	\$6.48	\$26.48	\$1,204,824
November	\$70.57	\$121.12	\$2,962,628	\$6.09	\$26.12	\$1,189,616
December	\$70.35	\$120.66	\$2,940,267	\$6.28	\$26.69	\$1,214,728
January	\$69.54	\$119.00	\$2,892,311	\$6.33	\$26.73	\$1,227,127
February	\$68.71	\$118.19	\$2,855,031	\$6.28	\$26.57	\$1,189,554
March	\$68.23	\$116.20	\$2,822,552	\$6.39	\$25.24	\$1,125,592
April	\$68.33	\$116.47	\$2,858,832	\$6.33	\$25.80	\$1,194,429
May	\$68.02	\$115.90	\$2,812,758	\$6.22	\$25.44	\$1,147,435
June	\$67.81	\$115.08	\$2,743,598	\$6.17	\$25.14	\$1,112,715
Total			\$34,404,552			\$14,144,981

SFY 2019	Medicaid		
	Total Custodial Parent Medicaid Savings	Total Child Medicaid Savings	Total Medicaid Savings
July	\$3,223,365	\$3,683,223	\$6,906,588
August	\$2,868,490	\$3,933,642	\$6,802,132
September	\$2,731,957	\$3,746,794	\$6,478,751
October	\$2,834,629	\$4,202,763	\$7,037,392
November	\$2,806,670	\$4,194,629	\$7,001,299
December	\$2,546,315	\$3,512,148	\$6,058,463
January	\$3,664,624	\$4,860,898	\$8,525,522
February	\$3,036,203	\$4,342,579	\$7,378,782
March	\$3,380,200	\$5,317,337	\$8,697,537
April	\$3,329,326	\$4,973,052	\$8,302,379
May	\$3,485,472	\$4,790,327	\$8,275,799
June	\$2,967,549	\$4,287,435	\$7,254,984
Total	\$36,874,800	\$51,844,827	\$88,719,628

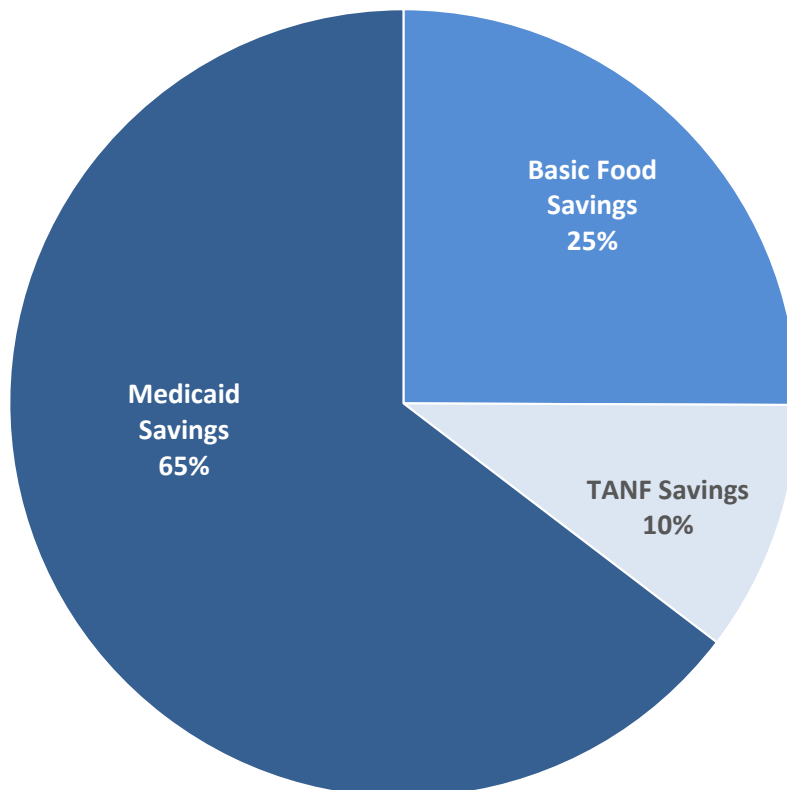
⁵ CR: Custodial parents with regular child support payments. Regular child support payments are defined as summed monthly order amount more than \$0 and summed total arrearage debt less than twice the summed monthly order amount.

⁶ CI: Custodial parents without regular child support payments.

Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2010 – SFY 2019



Sources of \$137.3 Million in Child Support Cost Avoidance, SFY 2019



Child Support Demographics, June 2019 Snapshot

Characteristic	Noncustodial Parents ⁷		Custodial Parents ⁸		Children	
	# of NCPs	Percent	# of CPs	Percent	# of Children	Percent
Total	223,202	100.0%	245,319	100.0%	250,925	100.0%

Gender	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
Female	35,569	15.9%	216,358	88.2%	123,495	49.2%
Male	187,340	83.9%	27,864	11.4%	127,352	50.8%
Unknown	293	0.1%	1,097	0.4%	78	<0.1%

Age of Parent	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
<26 Years Old	9,595	4.3%	12,228	5.0%	N/A	
26 – 35 Years Old	66,110	29.6%	72,131	29.4%		
36 – 45 Years Old	84,359	37.8%	87,190	35.5%		
46 – 55 Years Old	46,977	21.0%	47,217	19.2%		
56+ Years Old	14,812	6.6%	25,620	10.4%		
Not Reported/ Unidentifiable	1,349	0.6%	933	0.4%		

Age of Children	Children	
<6 Year Old	N/A	45,572 18.2%
6 – 10 Years Old		73,772 29.4%
11 – 15 Years Old		89,270 35.6%
16 – 18 Years Old		37,476 14.9%
19+ Years Old		4,768 1.9%
Not Reported/ Unidentifiable		67 <0.1%

Years	Noncustodial Parents	Custodial Parents	Children
Mean Age	40.6	41.6	10.9
Median Age	39.8	39.8	11.2

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

⁸ A CP may also be an NCP on another case.

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 provides in-demand occupational skills training, career counseling, job development and retention services, and responsive child support services to eligible noncustodial parents residing in Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties. Recruitment began in November 2018.
- **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 provides DCS services to program NCPs to help lower monthly payments or reduce state debts when appropriate, 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 includes technical assistance and evaluation services for the eight BICS Grantees. DCS was selected as the sole agency to receive this larger, overarching grant award. DCS has tested the use of behaviorally-informed strategies during the administrative *establishment* process, the early stages of order *enforcement*, and the *modification process for newly incarcerated parents*. DCS is currently reviewing the results of all the pilot projects and determining how to integrate successful elements statewide.

- **Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program** – DCS, along with tribal and child support programs located in California, Colorado, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming are testing digital marketing approaches and partnerships for outreach to families that could benefit from child support services. The two year grant was awarded to DCS in September, 2018 by the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). DCS conducted an eleven-week social media campaign using Facebook advertisements to build awareness of our work from April through June, 2019. The Facebook ads were the first in a series of three marketing interventions created as part of the grant. The second and third interventions will involve emailing flyers and streaming audio ads. The digital marketing strategies are being designed to increase program awareness and participation in the child support program.
- **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 August 2019 the voluntary program received 4,686 referrals. During the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2018, 1,125 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 is embraced by parents, field staff, prosecuting attorney staff, and community partners. This cooperative effort generates 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) 2019, paternity was established for 14,730 children, 75.1% of them by Paternity Acknowledgment/Acknowledgment of Parentage.

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 went into effect January 1, 2019 and expanded the use of the Acknowledgment to include presumed parents and intended parents, in addition to biological parents. The Paternity Acknowledgment form completely changed and is now known as the Acknowledgment of Parentage (AOP). DCS, in partnership with the Department of Health (DOH), Center for Health Status (CHS), provided training to hospitals, other providers, and staff in late 2018 and early 2019.

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 required notarized signatures on the Acknowledgment or Denial of Paternity, which were in effect through 2018. The Acknowledgment of Parentage (AOP), Denial of Parentage (DOP), and Rescission of Parentage (ROP) forms which have been in effect since 1/1/2019, give the parents the option of signing in front of a witness or a notary. Some hospitals have opted to offer only the notary option to parents. DCS reimburses hospitals for the cost to add Notaries Public, which historically increased 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.