

# Child Support Program

SFY

# 2021

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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**

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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, including the eligibility criteria, funding sources, and services/benefits provided, is available here ([see full document for the link](#)).

### TECHNICAL NOTES

**DATA SOURCES:** Data for this chapter was based on ESA Division of Child Support's Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) - September 2021 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 2021

- The average monthly child support caseload was 294,069 in SFY 2021, representing a 5% decrease from 309,616 in SFY 2020. Within this caseload, average monthly Current Assistance cases increased by 4.5% from 28,360 in SFY 2020 to 29,623 in SFY 2021; Former Assistance cases decreased by 7.3% from 165,759 to 153,670; and Never Assistance cases decreased by 4.1% from 115,497 to 110,777.
- The child support program collected a total of \$756.4 million in SFY 2021.
- The total cost avoidance in SFY 2021 was \$171.1 million. Of the total, \$98.7 million (57.7%) was for the Medicaid program; \$50.4 million (29.4%) was for the Basic Food program; and \$22 million (12.8%) was for the TANF program.
- An Acknowledgment of Parentage (AOP) is a legal form that establishes a parent-child relationship or “parentage”. By filing this form, a second parent is added to a child’s birth certificate. The vast majority are signed by unmarried birth mothers/parents and a second parent. On rare occasion, some parents already on a birth certificate through marriage or registered domestic partnership may choose to file an AOP for use outside of Washington to prove parentage. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) reported 25,659 births to unmarried birth mothers/parents. DOH reported that 19,074 (74.3%) of mothers/birth parents and a second parent jointly signed and filed Washington state AOP forms. The vast majority of these acknowledgments were signed at the hospital as a result of the efforts of Washington state’s Parentage and Paternity Program.

## Child Support Incentive<sup>1</sup> Scorecard, FFY 2020<sup>2</sup> and FFY 2021<sup>3</sup>

Measure	Goal Needed to Obtain 100% Funding	Actual Performance		Estimated Percentage of Maximum Incentive Reached	
		2020	2021	2020	2021
<b>Paternity Establishment Percentage</b>	80%	97.0%	95.4%	100%	100%
<b>Support Order Establishment</b>	80%	92.7%	93.1%	100%	100%
<b>Current Collections</b>	80%	67.4%	68.6%	77%	78%
<b>Arrearage Collections</b>	80%	71.0%	67.9%	82%	77%
<b>Cost Effectiveness</b>	5.00	4.23	4.32	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.

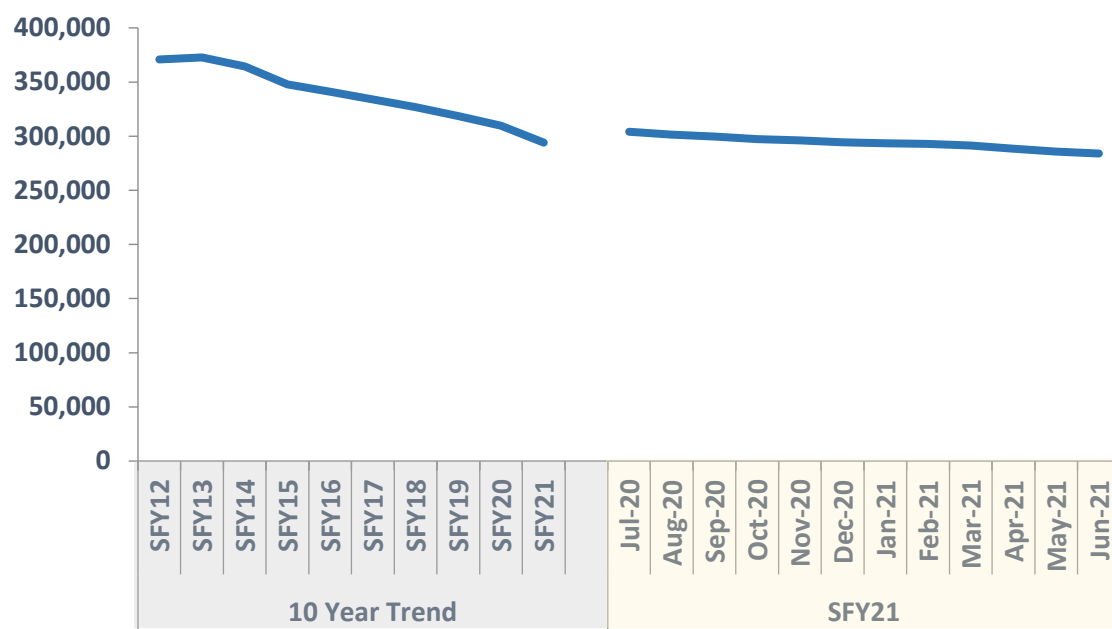
**Cost-effectiveness:** Total IV-D dollars collected divided by total IV-D dollars expended.

<sup>1</sup> DCS incentive payments for FFY 2020 are based on DCS actual FFY 2020 performance and OCSE FFY 2020 preliminary performance results for all other states. DCS incentive payments for FFY21 are based on DCS actual FFY 2021 performance and OCSE FFY 2021 preliminary performance results for all other states. Data source: DCS Fiscal Office.

<sup>2</sup> FFY 2020 data is from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) 2020 Preliminary Report.

<sup>3</sup> FFY 2021 data is preliminary based on unaudited federal reports.

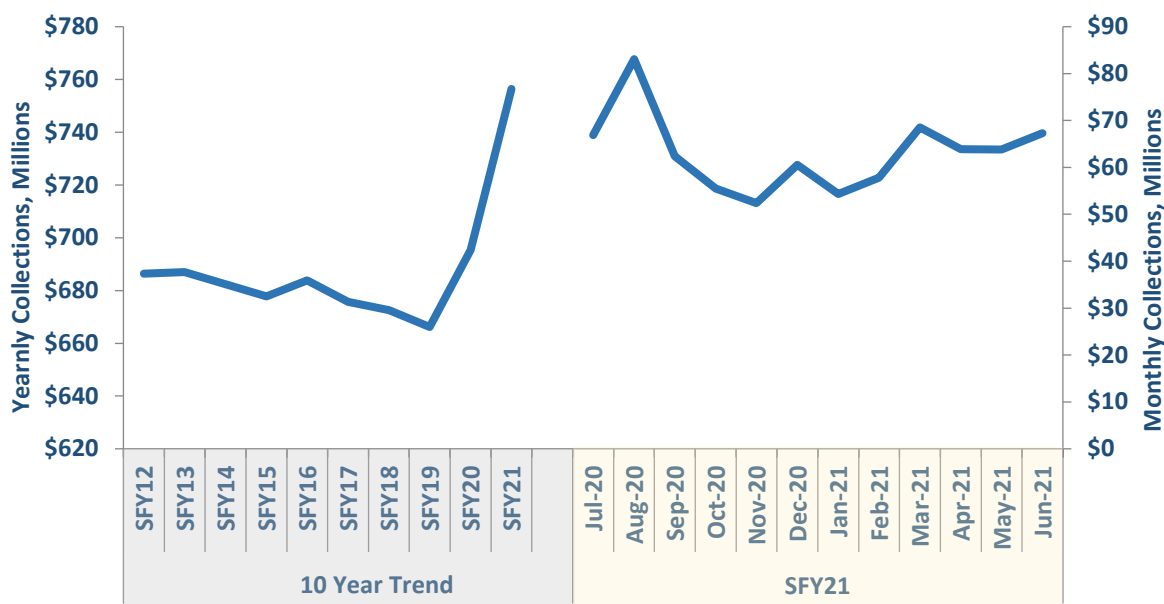
## Child Support Caseload, SFY 2012 – SFY 2021



SFY	Monthly Average Caseload	SFY	Monthly Average Caseload
SFY12	370,830	SFY17	334,027
SFY13	372,701	SFY18	326,923
SFY14	364,295	SFY19	318,444
SFY15	347,740	SFY20	309,616
SFY16	340,919	SFY21	294,069

SFY 2021	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Caseload
July	31,104	159,299	113,539	303,942
August	30,896	158,263	112,322	301,481
September	30,060	158,002	111,562	299,624
October	30,125	156,289	110,982	297,396
November	30,798	154,679	110,723	296,200
December	30,760	153,172	110,508	294,440
January	30,392	152,483	110,489	293,364
February	29,818	152,368	110,537	292,723
March	28,801	152,120	110,330	291,251
April	28,092	150,736	109,738	288,566
May	27,556	148,955	109,363	285,874
June	27,074	147,670	109,225	283,969
Mo. Avg.	29,623	153,670	110,777	294,069

## Child Support Collections, SFY 2012 – SFY 2021



SFY	Collections	SFY	Collections
SFY12	686,339,317	SFY17	675,702,583
SFY13	686,994,705	SFY18	672,521,073
SFY14	682,411,249	SFY19	666,175,348
SFY15	677,763,250	SFY20	695,311,638
SFY16	683,807,632	SFY21	756,412,192

SFY 2021	TANF/Foster Care	Former Assistance	Never Assistance	Total IV-D Collections
July	\$3,146,934	\$25,808,602	\$37,913,798	\$66,869,334
August	\$4,748,921	\$36,306,196	\$42,025,410	\$83,080,528
September	\$2,898,784	\$23,565,107	\$35,901,308	\$62,365,199
October	\$2,262,147	\$19,795,563	\$33,443,956	\$55,501,666
November	\$2,061,406	\$18,143,629	\$32,178,074	\$52,383,109
December	\$2,678,104	\$21,851,984	\$36,022,205	\$60,552,294
January	\$2,393,616	\$19,182,370	\$32,740,226	\$54,316,212
February	\$2,431,815	\$20,899,436	\$34,512,385	\$57,843,636
March	\$3,322,977	\$25,390,555	\$39,792,467	\$68,505,999
April	\$2,971,253	\$23,425,843	\$37,468,449	\$63,865,545
May	\$3,006,941	\$23,984,312	\$36,826,010	\$63,817,263
June	\$2,919,799	\$25,214,801	\$39,176,808	\$67,311,408
Total	\$34,842,697	\$283,568,398	\$438,001,097	\$756,412,192

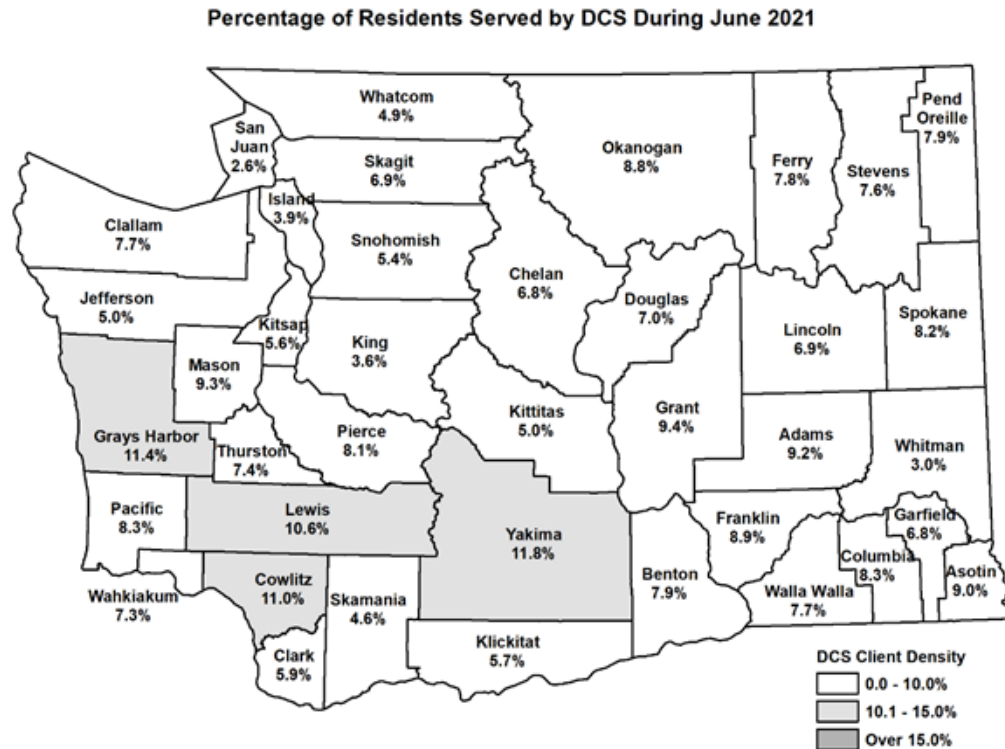
## Clients with DCS Cases by County of Residence, June 2021 Snapshot<sup>4</sup>

County	Clients	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served	County	Clients	Population Estimate	% of Residents Served
Adams	1,918	20,800	9.2%	Lewis	8,587	81,250	10.6%
Asotin	2,073	23,000	9.0%	Lincoln	772	11,150	6.9%
Benton	16,587	209,300	7.9%	Mason	6,145	66,250	9.3%
Chelan	5,514	81,600	6.8%	Okanogan	3,820	43,525	8.8%
Clallam	6,002	77,550	7.7%	Pacific	1,834	22,075	8.3%
Clark	30,208	512,800	5.9%	Pend Oreille	1,102	14,000	7.9%
Columbia	348	4,200	8.3%	Pierce	74,225	917,100	8.1%
Cowlitz	12,336	111,800	11.0%	San Juan	449	17,500	2.6%
Douglas	3,144	44,600	7.0%	Skagit	9,118	131,800	6.9%
Ferry	621	8,000	7.8%	Skamania	578	12,450	4.6%
Franklin	8,806	99,500	8.9%	Snohomish	45,231	844,400	5.4%
Garfield	153	2,250	6.8%	Spokane	43,320	527,600	8.2%
Grant	9,676	102,400	9.4%	Stevens	3,543	46,400	7.6%
Grays Harbor	8,575	75,450	11.4%	Thurston	21,958	295,300	7.4%
Island	3,380	86,350	3.9%	Wahkiakum	313	4,275	7.3%
Jefferson	1,618	32,450	5.0%	Walla Walla	4,815	62,350	7.7%
King	83,009	2,293,300	3.6%	Whatcom	11,121	228,700	4.9%
Kitsap	15,437	275,600	5.6%	Whitman	1,443	48,000	3.0%
Kittitas	2,371	47,400	5.0%	Yakima	30,812	261,300	11.8%
Klickitat	1,328	23,150	5.7%				
<b>State Total</b>	<b>482,290</b>	<b>7,766,925</b>	<b>6.2%</b>				

<sup>4</sup> Population estimate source: Office of Financial Management (OFM) population estimates



# Percentage of Total Population with a DCS Case by County, June 2021 Snapshot

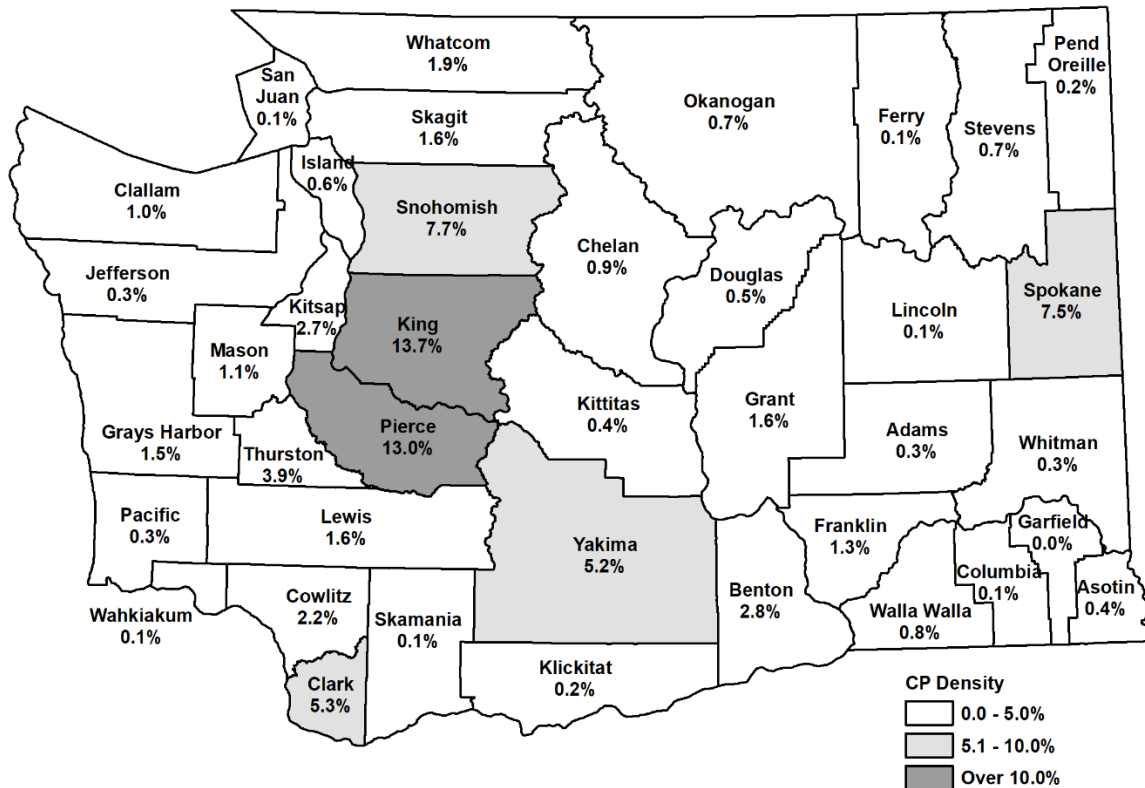


Note: The percentage of residents served is obtained by dividing the number of DCS clients in a county during June 2021 by the OFM 2021 County Population estimate.

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

## Percentage of Custodial Parents (CP) by County, June 2021 Snapshot

Percentage of Custodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2021

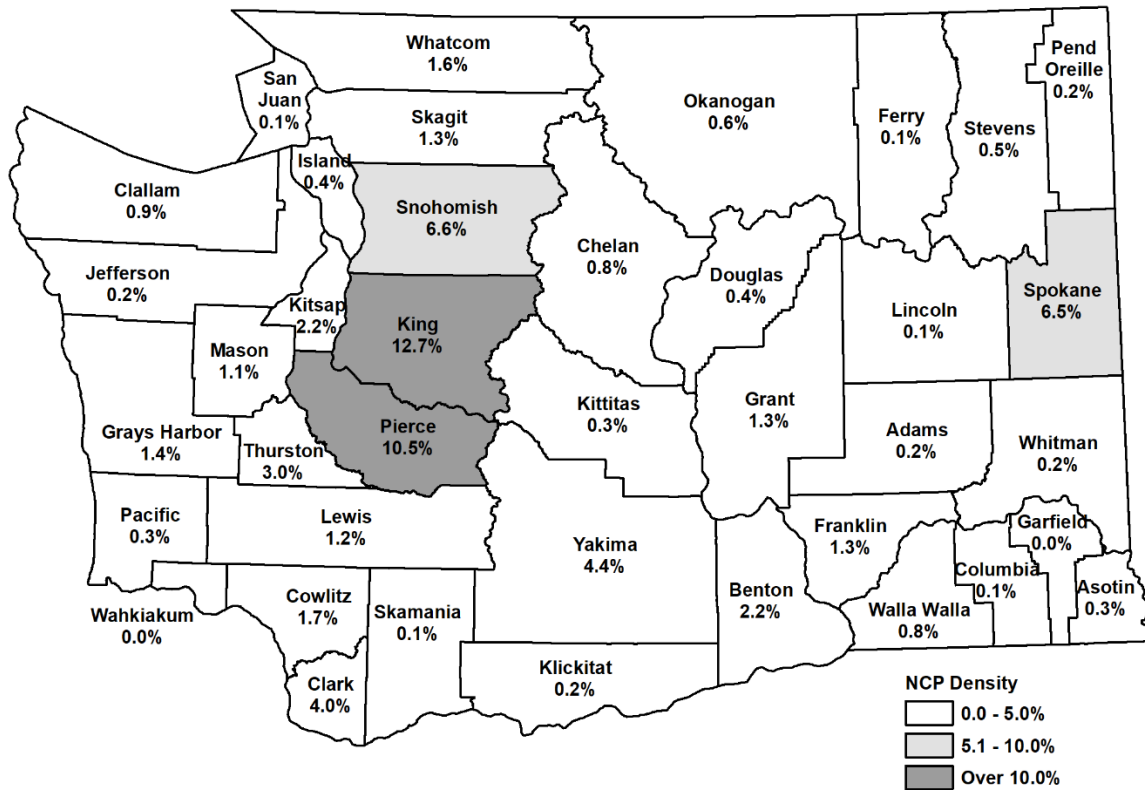


Note: 17.5% of CPs are out of state or do not have valid country address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2021

## Percentage of Noncustodial Parents (NCP) by County, June 2021 Snapshot

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2021



**Note:** 30.1% of NCPs are out of state or do not have valid country address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/E-MAPS - Sep. 2021

## Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2021

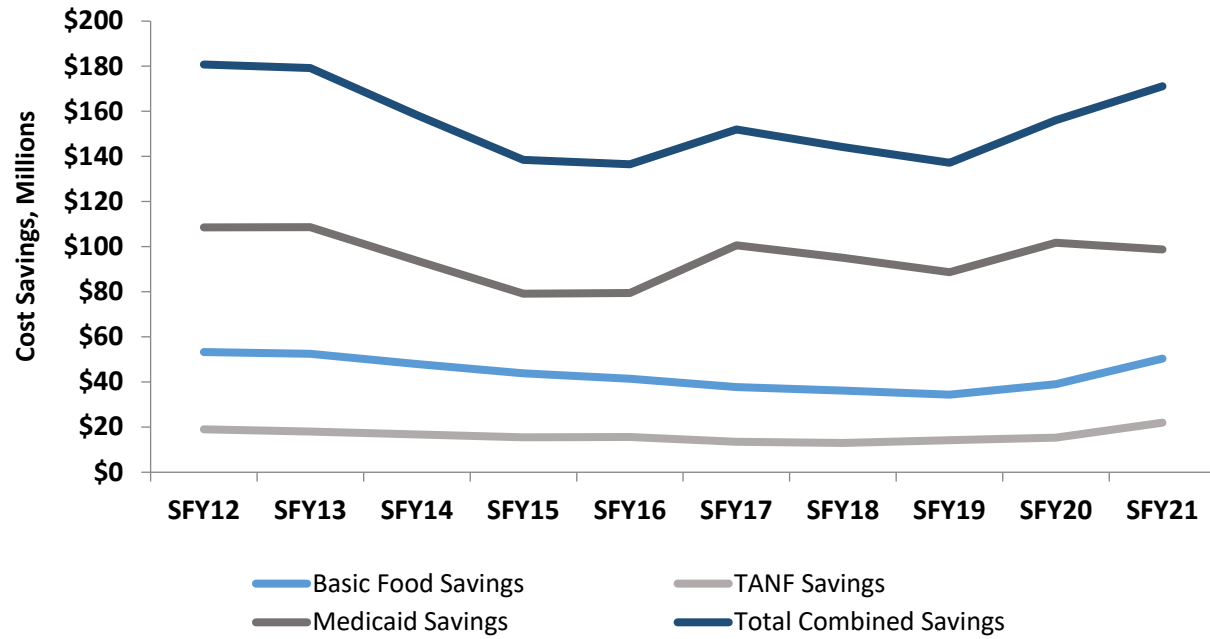
SFY 2021	Basic Food			TANF		
	Average CR <sup>5</sup> Basic Food Expenditure	Average CI <sup>6</sup> Basic Food Expenditure	Total Basic Food Savings	Average CR <sup>5</sup> TANF Expenditure	Average CI <sup>6</sup> TANF Expenditure	Total TANF Savings
July	\$127.16	\$180.99	\$3,503,149	\$10.03	\$38.02	\$1,741,053
August	\$130.34	\$184.29	\$3,570,232	\$10.59	\$39.97	\$1,814,688
September	\$129.77	\$184.78	\$3,595,652	\$10.61	\$39.70	\$1,782,401
October	\$135.32	\$195.02	\$3,872,334	\$10.36	\$39.71	\$1,818,821
November	\$135.08	\$195.05	\$3,864,106	\$10.46	\$39.99	\$1,796,522
December	\$138.15	\$199.40	\$3,934,764	\$10.79	\$41.89	\$1,918,165
January	\$163.54	\$233.17	\$4,524,373	\$10.81	\$41.64	\$1,931,453
February	\$161.98	\$230.35	\$4,412,180	\$10.67	\$41.44	\$1,894,748
March	\$160.92	\$226.74	\$4,359,882	\$10.86	\$40.59	\$1,895,733
April	\$168.24	\$241.81	\$4,882,346	\$10.57	\$38.47	\$1,806,641
May	\$155.24	\$231.38	\$5,002,726	\$10.31	\$38.09	\$1,788,718
June	\$153.85	\$227.17	\$4,855,080	\$10.17	\$37.59	\$1,787,537
Total			\$50,376,824			\$21,976,480

SFY 2021	Medicaid		
	Total Custodial Parent Medicaid Savings	Total Child Medicaid Savings	Total Medicaid Savings
July	\$3,426,076	\$4,617,742	\$8,043,818
August	\$3,597,560	\$4,136,994	\$7,734,554
September	\$3,618,767	\$4,642,187	\$8,260,955
October	\$3,279,684	\$4,556,968	\$7,836,652
November	\$3,370,904	\$4,302,457	\$7,673,361
December	\$3,633,127	\$4,385,599	\$8,018,726
January	\$3,898,492	\$4,396,756	\$8,295,248
February	\$3,786,920	\$4,607,358	\$8,394,278
March	\$4,211,887	\$4,456,112	\$8,667,998
April	\$4,542,727	\$4,508,433	\$9,051,160
May	\$3,995,312	\$4,629,344	\$8,624,656
June	\$4,002,445	\$4,138,735	\$8,141,180
Total	\$45,363,901	\$53,378,686	\$98,742,586

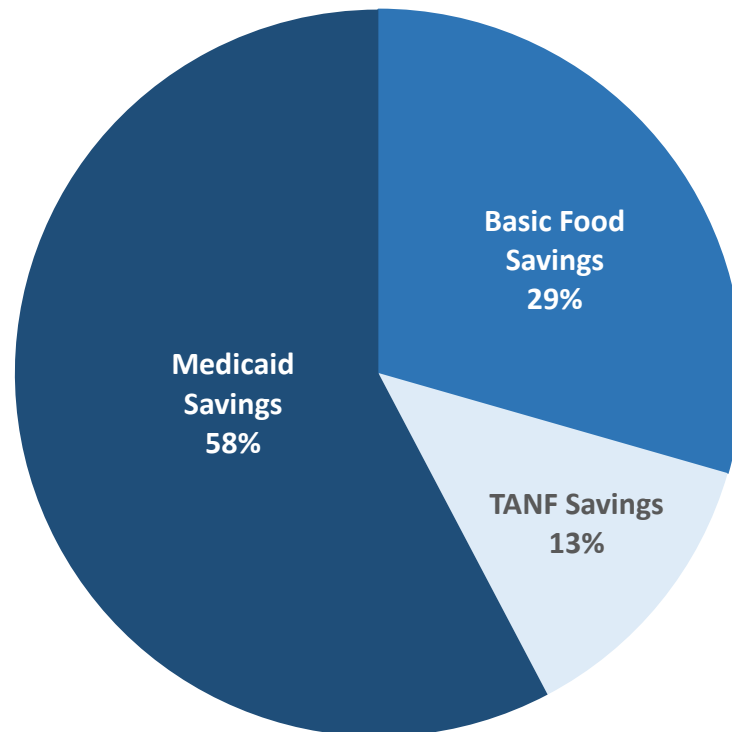
<sup>5</sup> CR: Custodial parents with regular child support payments. Regular child support payments are defined as summed monthly order amount more than \$0 and summed total arrearage debt less than twice the summed monthly order amount.

<sup>6</sup> CI: Custodial parents without regular child support payments.

## Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2012 – SFY 2021



### Sources of \$171.1 Million in Child Support Cost Avoidance, SFY 2021



## Child Support Demographics, June 2021 Snapshot

Characteristic	Noncustodial Parents <sup>7</sup>		Custodial Parents <sup>8</sup>		Children	
	# of NCPs	Percent	# of CPs	Percent	# of Children	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>203,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>224,448</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>228,470</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Gender	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
<b>Female</b>	31,173	15.3%	198,624	88.5%	112,247	49.1%
<b>Male</b>	171,662	84.5%	24,855	11.1%	116,148	50.8%
<b>Unknown</b>	265	0.1%	969	0.4%	75	<0.1%

Age of Parent	Noncustodial Parents		Custodial Parents		Children	
<b>&lt;26 Years Old</b>	6,839	3.4%	8,948	4.0%	N/A	
<b>26 – 35 Years Old</b>	56,569	27.9%	62,913	28.0%		
<b>36 – 45 Years Old</b>	80,668	39.7%	83,734	37.3%		
<b>46 – 55 Years Old</b>	43,142	21.2%	43,655	19.4%		
<b>56+ Years Old</b>	14,548	7.2%	24,476	10.9%		
<b>Not Reported/ Unidentifiable</b>	1,334	0.7%	722	0.3%		

Age of Children	Children			
<b>&lt;6 Year Old</b>	N/A		37,577	16.4%
<b>6 – 10 Years Old</b>			64,370	28.2%
<b>11 – 15 Years Old</b>			86,859	38.0%
<b>16 – 18 Years Old</b>			36,070	15.8%
<b>19+ Years Old</b>			3,549	1.6%
<b>Not Reported/ Unidentifiable</b>			45	<0.1%

Years	Noncustodial Parents	Custodial Parents	Children
<b>Mean Age</b>	41.2	42.1	11.2
<b>Median Age</b>	40.4	40.4	11.7

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

<sup>8</sup> A CP may also be an NCP on another case.

**Child Support Tribal Caseload**

SFY 2021 Caseload	Total Child Support TANF/Foster Care	Child Support Tribal TANF/Foster Care	% of Child Support Tribal TANF/Foster Care	Total Child Support Former Assistance	Tribal Child Support Former Assistance	% of Tribal Former Assistance
<b>July</b>	31,104	2,626	8.4%	159,299	7,621	4.8%
<b>August</b>	30,896	2,616	8.5%	158,263	7,562	4.8%
<b>September</b>	30,060	2,566	8.5%	158,002	7,528	4.8%
<b>October</b>	30,125	2,576	8.6%	156,289	7,426	4.8%
<b>November</b>	30,798	2,567	8.3%	154,679	7,396	4.8%
<b>December</b>	30,760	2,553	8.3%	153,172	7,332	4.8%
<b>January</b>	30,392	2,519	8.3%	152,483	7,300	4.8%
<b>February</b>	29,818	2,485	8.3%	152,368	7,250	4.8%
<b>March</b>	28,801	2,449	8.5%	152,120	7,181	4.7%
<b>April</b>	28,092	2,409	8.6%	150,736	7,103	4.7%
<b>May</b>	27,556	2,390	8.7%	148,955	6,992	4.7%
<b>June</b>	27,074	2,380	8.8%	147,670	6,944	4.7%
<b>Mo. Avg.</b>	<b>29,623</b>	<b>2,511</b>		<b>153,670</b>	<b>7,303</b>	

SFY 2021 Caseload	Total Child Support Never Assistance	Child Support Tribal Never Assistance	% of Child Support Tribal Never Assistance	Total Child Support	Total Child Support Tribal	% of Child Support Tribal
<b>July</b>	113,539	3,408	3.0%	303,942	13,655	4.5%
<b>August</b>	112,322	3,380	3.0%	301,481	13,558	4.5%
<b>September</b>	111,562	3,374	3.0%	299,624	13,468	4.5%
<b>October</b>	110,982	3,349	3.0%	297,396	13,351	4.5%
<b>November</b>	110,723	3,353	3.0%	296,200	13,316	4.5%
<b>December</b>	110,508	3,351	3.0%	294,440	13,236	4.5%
<b>January</b>	110,489	3,329	3.0%	293,364	13,148	4.5%
<b>February</b>	110,537	3,294	3.0%	292,723	13,029	4.5%
<b>March</b>	110,330	3,283	3.0%	291,251	12,913	4.4%
<b>April</b>	109,738	3,250	3.0%	288,566	12,762	4.4%
<b>May</b>	109,363	3,218	2.9%	285,874	12,600	4.4%
<b>June</b>	109,225	3,201	2.9%	283,969	12,525	4.4%
<b>Mo. Avg.</b>	<b>110,777</b>	<b>3,316</b>		<b>294,069</b>	<b>13,130</b>	

**Child Support Tribal Collections**

<b>SFY 2021</b>	<b>TANF/Foster Care</b>	<b>Former Assistance</b>	<b>Never Assistance</b>	<b>Total Child Support Collections</b>
<b>July</b>	\$128,446	\$583,093	\$433,812	\$1,145,351
<b>August</b>	\$212,746	\$913,617	\$587,071	\$1,713,435
<b>September</b>	\$120,330	\$523,705	\$402,587	\$1,046,622
<b>October</b>	\$81,106	\$423,262	\$347,071	\$851,439
<b>November</b>	\$79,993	\$331,556	\$342,961	\$754,510
<b>December</b>	\$108,439	\$490,851	\$386,900	\$986,190
<b>January</b>	\$85,075	\$394,433	\$327,964	\$807,472
<b>February</b>	\$81,556	\$434,070	\$354,624	\$870,250
<b>March</b>	\$116,476	\$555,842	\$437,338	\$1,109,656
<b>April</b>	\$111,220	\$501,958	\$427,191	\$1,040,369
<b>May</b>	\$134,190	\$578,346	\$443,937	\$1,156,473
<b>June</b>	\$127,719	\$559,360	\$473,627	\$1,160,706
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,387,294</b>	<b>\$6,290,094</b>	<b>\$4,965,085</b>	<b>\$12,642,473</b>



## Special Grants/Projects

**Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting** – The Office of Child Support Enforcement awarded DCS \$1 million dollars to participate in the second cohort of the Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting demonstration. The primary goal of the grant project is to leverage DCS’s expertise on the legal and financial responsibilities of parenting to educate and motivate teens and young adults to postpone parenthood until after they have completed their education, started a career, and entered a committed relationship. Some research suggests that individuals who follow this “success sequence” are less likely to experience poverty and more likely to be economically self-sufficient as adults. DCS plans to collaborate with schools and fatherhood organizations to deliver child support and parenting curriculum to young adults and connect them with resources in their area. Initial meetings with the project team and OCSE have focused on reviewing program design, potential partners, and lessons learned from the first cohort. The remainder of the planning year will be spent finalizing an implementation and evaluation plan and formalizing agreements with partners.

**The Alternative Solutions Program** – This statewide program was implemented by DCS in July 2014 to assist 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 2020 the voluntary program received 6,575 referrals. During the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020, 987 parents were served, and 85% successfully connected with needed resources to address barriers. The program maintains a database of over 4700 resources with a version available to the public, allowing any Washingtonian to connect with local community resources. 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.

**Tribal partnerships** - Through mutual respect and trust, DCS and tribes have worked collaboratively for over 30 years to improve and provide child support services to Washington families. Currently, eight Washington tribes operate their own federally-funded child support programs. Through our intergovernmental and cooperative agreements, DCS can offer federal enforcement remedies to those programs as well as collection services to customers of numerous tribal TANF programs. Our tribal partnerships continue to benefit Native and non-Native families alike. Collections from DCS’ tribal cases - whether enrolled tribal member(s), or parent(s) working for a tribal business - in SFY 2020 exceeded \$12.5 million.

## Voluntary Acknowledgments and Genetic Testing

### Parentage Program Background

The Washington State Parentage Program (originally known as the Paternity Affidavit 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 an Acknowledgment of Parentage at the child's birth or a later date. Most Acknowledgments of Parentage are signed at a birthing hospital or midwife practice. 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 70.58A.100 and Chapter 26.26A RCW are the applicable state laws.

A hospital, midwife, or other authorized entity must provide an opportunity for unmarried parents to sign an Acknowledgment of Parentage 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 second page of the Acknowledgment form) and oral notice (a short video or 1-800 line). Upon receipt of a properly completed and notarized or witnessed Acknowledgment of Parentage, DOH must name the father/second parent on the child's birth certificate.

**Effects of the Acknowledgment of Parentage:** A properly signed and filed Acknowledgment of Parentage creates a legal determination of parentage immediately without the need for a court order. Parentage for a child of unmarried parents must be legally established 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 parentage 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 Acknowledgment of Parentage 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 Acknowledgment of Parentage, which is a much quicker and less costly process than establishing parentage through the courts. 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 administrative Parentage Program, DCS saves taxpayers more than \$13,000,000 yearly. In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021, paternity was established for 10,466 children, 76.1% of them by Acknowledgment of Parentage.

**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/parentage 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 an 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 they are the child's biological parents before signing an Acknowledgment.