COLORADO’S CHILDREN 2017

Colorado’s Children at a Glance

State Population 5,456,574
Population, Children Under 18 1,256,772
State Poverty Rate 11.5%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 14.7%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5–17 14.0%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 16.8%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2015, Colorado had 81,328 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 29,219 reports were referred for investigation.
- In 2015, there were 10,100 victims of abuse or neglect in Colorado, a rate of 8.0 per 1,000 children, a an increase 1.2% from 2014. Of these children, 80.3% were neglected, 11.5% were physically abused, and 10% were sexually abused.
- The number of child victims has decreased 4.6% in comparison to the number of victims in 2011.
- In 2015, there were 19 child deaths resulting from abuse or neglect reported in Colorado.
- 5,644 children in Colorado lived apart from their families in out-of-home care in 2015, compared with 6,488 children in 2011. Of the children living apart from their families in 2014, there were 1,807 aged 5 or younger, and 1,849 were 16 or older.
- The number of children living apart from their families in out-of-home care has decreased 13.0% in comparison to the number of children in out-of-home care in 2011.
- In 2015, of children in out-of-home care in Colorado, 43% were white, 12% were black, 38% were Hispanic, 1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1% were Asian or Pacific Islander and 6% were of more than one race or ethnicity.

ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 4,522 children exiting out-of-home care in 2014 in Colorado, 48% were reunited with their parents or primary caretakers.
- 820 children were legally adopted through a public child welfare agency in Colorado in 2015, an increase of 6.6% from 769 in 2014.
- Of the 5,644 children in out-of-home care in 2015, there were 926 or 16.4% waiting to be adopted.
• In 2015, approximately 35,710 grandparents in Colorado had the primary responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.\(^{18}\)

• 1,321 of the children in out-of-home care in 2014 were living with relatives while in care.\(^{19}\)

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

• The monthly average number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Colorado decreased from 45,174 in 2015 to 43,317 in 2016, a 4.3% change. There was a 16,461 monthly average of families received TANF in 2016, a decrease of 4.1% from 2015.\(^{20}\)

• In Colorado in 2015, 432,000 children lived below 200% of poverty.\(^{21}\)

• $300,851,205 was spent in 2015 on TANF assistance in Colorado, including 22.5% on basic assistance, 19.4% on child care, 2.3% on transportation, and 0.0% on nonassistance.\(^{22}\)

• $45,143,629 was spent in 2015 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) in Colorado, serving 90,954 participants.\(^{23}\)

• In 2014, Colorado distributed $309,678,517 in child support funds, an increase of 2.9% from 2013.\(^{24}\)

• 403,000 children in Colorado lived in households with a high housing burden in 2014, where more than 30% of monthly income is spent on housing costs.\(^{25}\)

• In December of 2016, the unemployment rate in Colorado was 3.0.\(^{26}\)

• 13.6% of households in Colorado were food insecure on average from 2012 to 2014, meaning that the family experienced difficulty providing enough food due to lack of resources at some point during the year.\(^{27}\)

CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

• In 2015, Colorado had a monthly average of 16,900 children served by subsidized child care. An average of 16,700 children received subsidized child care per month in 2014 and 15,900 were recipients in 2013.\(^{28}\)

• In 2016, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Colorado, a family of three could make no more than at application, which is equivalent to of the state’s median income.\(^{29}\)

• As of early 2016, Colorado had 24 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.\(^{30}\)

• In 2015, Head Start served 10,945 children in Colorado, an increase of 3.7% from 2014.\(^{31}\)

• Through federal grants from the Home Visiting Program, in fiscal year 2015, home visitors in Colorado made 30,546 home visits to 5,047 parents and children in 2,529 families, as well as enrolled 2,734 new parents and children to the program.
HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- 502,210 children in Colorado were enrolled in Medicaid in 2015, an increase of 6.8% from 2014.32

- In 2015, Colorado had 86,133 children enrolled in its State Children’s Health Insurance Program, a decrease of 45.7% from 2014, when 125,471 children were enrolled.33

- In 2015, Colorado had 52,423 uninsured children.34

- 6,001 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams in Colorado in 2015.35

- 309 infants under age 1 died in Colorado in 2015.36

- In 2015, the birth rate for teens ages 15 to 17 in Colorado was 8.4 births per 1,000 girls. The rate was 35.9 for teens ages 18 to 19. This reflects a total rate of 19 births for girls ages 15 to 19.37

- Cumulative through 2015, there were 10,982 adults and adolescents and 34 children younger than 13 reported as having HIV/AIDS in Colorado.38

- In 2015, an estimated 5,000 children ages 12 to 17 were alcohol dependent in the past year and 179,000 adults age 18 and older were dependent on alcohol or used heroin in the past year in Colorado.39

- In 2014, approximately 13,000 children ages 12 to 17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.40

- In 2014, approximately 17,000 children ages 12 to 17 needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.41

- In 2015, health care costs related to opioid abuse in Colorado reached $593,705,700.

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- 323 children in Colorado aged out of out-of-home care—exited foster care to emancipation—in 2015.42

- 77% of high school students in Colorado graduated on time at the end of the 2012-13 year.43

- 20,000 teens ages 16 to 19 in Colorado were not enrolled in school and not working in 2015.44

- 61,000 young adults ages 18 to 24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school in 2015.45

- 45.8% of young adults in Colorado ages 25 to 34 had an associate’s degree or higher from 2011 to 2013.46

- In 2015, there were 17 reports of children in Colorado aged 10 to 14 committing suicide, and 73 reports of suicide among children aged 15 to 19.47
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- 52 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Colorado in 2015, compared to 49 in 2014.48
- 24,566 children younger than 18 were arrested in Colorado in 2015. Violent crimes were the reason for 636 of the arrests in 2015.49
- 1,077 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Colorado in 2013.50

Child Welfare Workforce51

- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have clearly demonstrated that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.52
- According to a 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children; these high caseloads contribute to high worker turnover and insufficient services being provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.53
- Average turnover rates for child welfare agencies range from 20% to 40%.54 Turnover rates at around 10% are considered to be optimal in any agency.55
- Caseworker turnover has negative outcomes for children in the child welfare system, including placement disruptions and increased time in out-of-home care. 56
- According to the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II baseline report, 75% of caseworkers earned a salary between $30,000 and $49,999.57
- The majority of caseworkers hold a bachelor’s degree (52.3%) or a bachelor of social work degree (21.9%). Only 25% of caseworkers hold a master’s degree.58
- A workload model in Colorado found that approximately 574 additional caseworkers were needed in their state to adequately provide child welfare services, due to estimated time requirements for meaningful services. This number represents a 49% increase that is needed on top of hours already spent on case related tasks.59

Social Services Block Grant

- In 2014, Colorado’s sum of expenditures for services totaled $25,819,184. The most utilized service in Colorado was Foster Care Services for Children totaling $23,529,113.60

Funding Child Welfare Services for Colorado’s Children

- In 2014, Colorado spent $413,358,464 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, $118,874,075 was from federal funds and $294,484,389 was from state and local funds.61
- In 2014, of the $118,874,075 in federal funds received for child welfare, 67.5% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 5.2% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 3.4% was from Medicaid, 19.8% came from Social Services Block Grant, 0% was from TANF, and 4.1% came from other federal sources.\textsuperscript{62}

- Colorado received $17,739,376 in federal funds for IV-E foster care expenditures in 2014, including $0 for maintenance payments and $17,739,376 for administration, child placement, the statewide automated child welfare information system, and training.\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} “At A Glance” statistics are from 2014.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} U.S. Census Bureau (2016). \textit{ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2014 American Community Survey 1-year estimates}. Retrieved January 28, 2016 from \url{http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/}.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{6} U.S. Census Bureau (2016). \textit{Selected Economic Characteristics, 2014 American Community Survey 1-year estimates}. Retrieved January 28, 2016 from \url{http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/}.
  \item \textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2015). \textit{Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, Child Trends, National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: Children in Foster Care by Age Group, 2013, <1 and 1-5 age groups (Number)}. Retrieved February 1, 2016 from \url{http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6244-children-in-foster-care-by-age-group#detailed/2/2-52/false/36/1889,2616/12988}.
The component funding streams may not equal the total, depending on additional child support and demonstration funds for this state.

The dearth in current state-by-state workforce data makes clear the need for critical data on compensation, working conditions including safety issues, academic degrees held, education and training received, and factors contributing to turnover. To address this, CWLA is calling for Congress to authorize the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct an updated study on the child welfare workforce. It would make recommendations regarding caseloads and workloads, education levels, and training requirements. In addition, the study would examine data reporting and collection and make recommendations on how states might improve these efforts.


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