WASHINGTON’S CHILDREN 2019


ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 5,423 children exiting out-of-home care in 2017 in Washington, 62% were reunited with their parents or primary caretakers.\(^{15}\)
- 1,345 children were legally adopted through a public child welfare agency in Washington in 2017, a decrease of 3.1% from 1,387 in 2016.\(^{16}\)
- Of the 11,355 children in out-of-home care in 2017, there were 3,569 or 31.4% waiting to be adopted.\(^{17}\)
- In 2017, approximately 43,711 grandparents in Washington had the primary responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.\(^{18}\)
- 3,758 of the children in out-of-home care in 2016 were living with relatives while in care.\(^{19}\)

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2017, Washington had 95,603 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 36,023 reports were referred for investigation.\(^{8}\)
  - In 2017, there were 4,836 victims of abuse or neglect in Washington, a rate of 2.7 per 1,000 children, a decrease of 38.5% from 2013. Of these children, 79% were neglected, 20.8% were physically abused, and 10.6% were sexually abused.\(^{9}\)
  - The number of child victims has decreased 38.5% in comparison to the number of victims in 2013.\(^{10}\)
  - In 2017, there were 18 child deaths resulting from abuse or neglect reported in Washington.\(^{11}\)
11,355 children in Washington lived apart from their families in out-of-home care in 2017, compared with 10,959 children in 2016. Of the children living apart from their families in 2016, there were 5,129 aged 5 or younger, and 1,362 were 16 or older.12

The number of children living apart from their families in out-of-home care has increased 3.5% in comparison to the number of children in out-of-home care in 2016.13

**CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT**

Children in Out-of-Home Care 2016

- The monthly average number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Washington decreased from 58,608 in 2017 to 55,481 in 2018, a 5.3% change. There was a 25,522-monthly average of families received TANF in 2018, a decrease of 4.9% from 2017.20

- In Washington in 2017, 537,000 children lived below 200% of poverty.21

- $419,327,445 was spent in 2017 on TANF assistance in Washington, including 34.2% on basic assistance, 28.6% on child care, 0.0% on transportation, and 0.8% on non-assistance.22

**CHILD CARE AND HEAD START**

- In 2017, Washington had a monthly average of 41,900 children served by subsidized child care. An average of 46,800 children received subsidized child care per month in 2016 and 44,900 were recipients in 2015.28

- In 2017, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Washington, a family of three could make no more than $40,320 at application, which is equivalent to 55% of the state’s median income.29

- As of early 2017, Washington had no children on its waiting list for child care assistance.30

- In 2017, Head Start served 11,962 children in Washington, a decrease of 3.3% from 2015.31

- Through federal grants from the Home Visiting Program, in fiscal year 2017, home visitors in Washington made 18,118 home visits to 3,419 participants in 1,692 households.65
- $66,867,766 was spent in 2018 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) in Washington, serving 145,015 participants.23

- In 2017, Washington distributed $632,754,285 in child support funds, a decrease of 2.9% from 2013.24

- 504,000 children in Washington lived in households with a high housing burden in 2016, where more than 31% of monthly income is spent on housing costs.25

- In December of 2018, the unemployment rate in Washington was 4.5. 26

- 12.0% of households in Washington were food insecure on average in 2016, meaning that the family experienced difficulty providing enough food due to lack of resources at some point during the year.27

**HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

- 806,832 children in Washington were enrolled in Medicaid in 2017, an increase of 2.8% from 2016.32

- In 2017, Washington had 64,961 children enrolled in its State Children’s Health Insurance Program, an increase of 2.3% from 2014, when 66,517 children were enrolled.33

- In 2017, Washington had 65,071 uninsured children.34

- 5,792 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams in Washington in 2016.35

- 390 infants under age 1 died in Washington in 2016.36

- In 2017, the birth rate for teens ages 15 to 17 in Washington was 5.5 births per 1,000 girls. The rate was 29.4 for teens ages 18 to 19. This reflects a total rate of 17 births for girls ages 15 to 19.37

- Cumulative through 2017, there were 14,898 adults and adolescents and 33 children younger than 13 reported as having HIV/AIDS in Washington.38
In 2017, an estimated 12,000 children ages 12 to 17 were alcohol dependent in the past year and 361,000 adults age 18 and older were dependent on alcohol or used heroin in the past year in Washington.\(^{39}\)

In 2017, approximately 11,000 children ages 12 to 17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.\(^{40}\)

In 2017, approximately 21,000 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 Washington reached $976,839,152.\(^{64}\)

**VULNERABLE YOUTH**

- 181 children in Washington aged out of out-of-home care—exited foster care to emancipation—in 2016.\(^{42}\)

- 78.2% of high school students in Washington graduated on time at the end of the 2014-15 year.\(^{43}\)

- 25,000 teens ages 16 to 19 in Washington were not enrolled in school and not working in 2016.\(^{44}\)

- 84,000 young adults ages 18 to 24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school in 2016.\(^ {45}\)

- 35.9% of young adults in Washington ages 25 to 34 had a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2017.\(^{46}\)

- In 2017, there were no reports of children in Washington aged 10 to 14 committing suicide, and 77 reports of suicide among children aged 15 to 19.\(^ {47}\)

**JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION**

- 59 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Washington in 2017, compared to 49 in 2016.\(^ {48}\)
11,818 children younger than 18 were arrested in Washington in 2017. Violent crimes were the reason for 890 of the arrests in 2017.49

921 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Washington in 2015.50

**CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE**

*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

**SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT**

In 2016, Washington’s sum of expenditures for services totaled $34,892,677. The most utilized service in Washington was Foster Care Services for Children totaling $18,896,973.60
FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR WASHINGTON’S CHILDREN

In 2016, Washington spent $540,559,048 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, $252,751,060 was from federal funds and $287,807,988 was from state and local funds.61

In 2016, of the $252,751,060 in federal funds received for child welfare, 56.5% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 4.5% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 7.4% came from Medicaid, 15.4% came from Social Services Block Grant, 13.1% was from TANF, and 3.2% came from other federal sources.62

Washington received $142,803,692 in federal funds for IV-E foster care expenditures in 2014, including $1,633,629 for maintenance payments and $4,807,183 for administration, child placement, the statewide automated child welfare information system, and training.6

1 “At A Glance” statistics are from 2018.


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid


7 Ibid.


Note: The percentage difference is a CWLA calculation. Overlap in the percentages of types of abuse is possible as a child may have experienced more than one type of abuse.


Note: The five and younger number is a CWLA calculation.


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WASHINGTON’S CHILDREN AT A GLANCE

22, 2019 from


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Note: Some states allow families, once they begin receiving assistance, to continue receiving assistance up to a higher income level than the initial limit.

30 Ibid.

Note: A family that is eligible for child care assistance may not necessarily receive it. States may place families on waiting lists, or freeze intake (turning away eligible families without adding them to a waiting list).


Note: The percent difference is a CWLA calculation.


Note: The percent difference is a CWLA calculation. Children who switched between CHIP and Medicaid are represented in both data sets.


51 Note: 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.


53 Ibid.


58 Ibid.


Note: Examples of direct services include child abuse/neglect investigations, foster care, community-based programs, case management, and all such services required for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. Examples of administrative services include management information systems, training programs, eligibility determination processes, and all services that provide the infrastructure supports for the public agency. The component funding streams may not equal the total, depending on additional child support and demonstration funds for this state.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.
