Child Maltreatment

In 2018, Montana had 17,817 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 10,073 were referred for investigation.

There were 3,763 child victims of abuse or neglect in Montana in 2018, at a rate of 16.4 children per 1,000. This translates to a 216% increase since 2014.

Of the 3,763 children, 3,093 were first time victims.

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 498 of the 3,763 cases.

Types of Maltreatment Victims, 2018

- 87% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2017 were parents of the child. 13% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.
- 50% of Montana’s child victims in 2017 were female while 50% were male.

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2018, 5 infants were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.
- Montana reported no plans of safe care for screened-in infants.
Foster Care and Adoptions

- **6,098** total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2018.
- **3,946** were in care on the day of September 30th, 2018.
- **2,312** children entered care during the 2018 FY while **2,154** exited during the same year.
- **396** of Montana’s children were adopted while **977** were waiting to be adopted.

There was a **2.4%** increase in the number of children in care between 2017 and 2018. Adoptions from the system also increased **44.5%** from 2017.

**68** children in Montana aged out and exited foster care in 2017. This is an increase from **73** in 2016 and represents a **6.8%** decrease.

- Children in foster care in 2017 spent an average of **16.3** months in care.
- The average length of stay in Montana for children waiting to be adopted from foster care is **27.6** months.
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2017 was **7.7** years old.
- The average age of adopted children was **5.8** years old.
Montana’s Children 2020

Where are Children in Foster Care Staying?

- Data from 2017 shows that 1,123 children in foster care within Montana were living with non-relatives while 1,797 stayed with a relative.
- 294 children were staying in group homes while 7 children were classified as runaways.xxii
- 2% of households in Montana in 2017 had a grandparent living with a grandchild.xxiii
- The average length of time a child in care spent living with their current relative foster family was 9.2 months.xxiv

Child Poverty

Montana had 68,000 children in 2017 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 30% of all children.xxv

- 22% of Montana’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden.xxvi
- The average number of individuals receiving TANF rose from 10,138 in 2017 to 10,300 in 2018. This represents a 1.6% increase.xxvii
- The state spent $6,532,784 on WIC in 2019, serving 15,754 people. This represents a 5.6% decrease in total participants and a 5.7% decrease in spending.xxviii

116,120 people in Montana were food insecure in 2017, including 36,910 children who struggled with hunger.xxix

- 40.4% of households in Montana with children received SNAP benefits in 2017.xxx
Health

Montana had 942 low birth-weight babies born in 2017 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 8% of infants born in Montana in 2017. xxxi

Montana had a total of 1,047 preterm births in 2018, meaning less than 37 completed weeks of gestation. 8.2% of all white babies were born premature while 1% of black babies arrived prematurely in 2018. The total premature birth rate was 9.1%. xxxii

There were 645 births to mothers aged 15-19 in Montana in 2017, representing a rate of 21 in every 1,000 teen girls. xxxiii

64 infants under 1 died in Montana in 2017, representing an infant mortality rate of 5.4 per 1,000. xxxiv

Public Health Insurance Coverage for Children, 2018

- 2% of Montana’s children had no health insurance in 2018. This represents 15,000 children. xxxvi
- 139,837 children in Montana were enrolled in Medicaid in 2018. This represents a 3.4% increase from 2017. xxxvii
- 31,284 children in Montana were in the state Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2018. This represents a 2.6% decrease from 2017. xxxviii
Juvenile Justice System

- There were 3,722 total arrests for children under 18 in Montana in 2018.
- 254 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 666 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 358 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.
- 183 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Montana in 2017. This is an increase from 171 kids in 2015, representing a 7% incline.

Teens & Youth

- 4,000 (7%) of Montana’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2017.
- In 2017, there were no reports of children in Montana aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 13 reports of suicide among children aged 15-19.
- 412 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Montana in 2017.

Child Welfare Services Funding

- Montana spent $81,393,837 on child welfare services in 2016. Child welfare services are all of the direct and administrative services that state agencies provide to children and families.
- $50,179,226 were allocated from the federal government and $31,214,611 came from state and local funds.

Federal Funding Sources

- The breakdown of the $50,179,226 in federal funding received in Montana in 2016:
  - $11,908,361 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
  - $7,449,494 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.
  - Montana’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2017 was $4,768,874.
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Based on Calculations from the CWLA.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


xxvi Ibid.


xxx Ibid.


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