Child Maltreatment

In 2018, Washington had 106,372 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 41,077 were referred for investigation.

There were 4,498 child victims of maltreatment in Washington in 2018, at a rate of 2.7 children per 1,000. This translates to an 38.7% decrease since 2014.

Of the 4,498 children, 2,074 were first time victims.

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 383 of the 4,498 cases.

84% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2017 were parents of the child. 16% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.

52% of Washington’s child victims in 2017 were female while 48% were male.

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2018, Washington did not report the number of infants who were screened in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.

- Washington reported no plans of safe care for screened-in infants.
Child fatalities increased in 2018 from 18 in 2017 to 28 in 2018.xi

Washington reported 42 total child victims of sex trafficking with 26 females and 16 males.xii

2,886 victims received postresponse services while 3,841 non-victims received postresponse services as well.xiii

Foster Care and Adoptions
- 16,821 total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2018.
- 11,399 were in care on the day of September 30th, 2018.
- 5,568 children entered care during the 2018 FY while 5,422 exited during the same year.
- 1,331 of Washington’s children were adopted while 3,733 were waiting to be adopted.xv

There was a 0.3% increase in the number of children in care between 2017 and 2018. Adoptions from the system decreased 1% from 2017.xvi

189 children in Washington aged out and exited foster care in 2017. This is an increase from 181 in 2016 and represents an 4.4% increase.xvii

- Children in foster care in 2017 spent an average of 22.7 months in care.xviii
- The average length of stay in Washington for children waiting to be adopted from foster care in 32.2 months.xix
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2017 was 6.7 years old.xx
- The average age of adopted children was 5.6 years old.xxi
Data from 2017 shows that 4,948 children in foster care within Washington were living with non-relatives while 3,943 stayed with a relative. xxii

538 children were staying in group homes while 101 children were classified as runaways.xxiii

3% of households in Washington in 2017 had a grandparent living with a grandchild.xxiv

The average length of time a child in care spent living with their current relative foster family was 12.3 months.xxv

Child Poverty

Washington had 429,000 children in 2017 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 26% of all children.xxvi

31% of Washington’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden.xxvii

The average number of individuals receiving TANF fell from 60,448 in 2017 to 55,481 in 2018. This represents a 8.2% decrease.xxviii

The state spent $58,813,833 on WIC in 2019, serving 135,297 people. This represents a 6.7% decrease in total participants and a 15.2% decrease in spending. xxix

848,990 people in Washington were food insecure in 2017, including 284,760 children who struggled with hunger.xxx

32.1% of households in Washington that received SNAP benefits in 2017 had children.xxxi
The Health section of the report provides data on low birth-weight babies and preterm births in Washington. In 2017, Washington had 5,776 low birth-weight babies, constituting 6.6% of all births. Washington had a total of 7,147 preterm births in 2018, 7.7% of all white babies were born premature, while 10.2% of black babies arrived prematurely. The total premature birth rate was 8.3%. There were 3,191 births to mothers aged 15-19, representing a rate of 15 in every 1,000 teen girls.

341 infants under 1 died in 2017, representing an infant mortality rate of 3.9 per 1,000.

The report also includes statistics on public health insurance coverage for children in Washington in 2018. 822,258 children were enrolled in Medicaid, representing a 1.7% decrease from 2017. 87,732 children were in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP), representing an 18.4% increase from 2017. 2.7% of children had no health insurance, which corresponds to 47,000 children. Washington is a Medicaid expansion state.

The report highlights improvements in children's health, such as the increase in Medicaid enrollment and CHIP enrolment, and areas for improvement, such as the infant mortality rate and uninsured rates.
Juvenile Justice System
- There were 10,996 total arrests for children under 18 in Washington in 2018.
- 263 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 2,274 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 1,053 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.
- 834 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Washington in 2017. This is a decrease from 921 kids in 2015, representing a 17.3% decline.

Teens & Youth
- 22,000 (6%) of Washington’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2017.
- In 2017, there were 0 reports of children in Washington aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 77 reports of suicide among children aged 15-19.
- 59 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Washington in 2017.

Child Welfare Services Funding
- Washington spent $540,559,048 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.
- $252,751,060 were allocated from the federal government and $287,807,988 came from state and local funds.

Federal Funding Sources
- The breakdown of the $252,751,060 in federal funding received in Washington in 2016.
  - $6,440,812 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
  - $47,769,272 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.
  - Washington’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2017 was $35,107,288.


xvi Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xx Ibid.

xxi Ibid.


xxiii Ibid.

xxiv Ibid.


xxvii Ibid.


xoxi Ibid.


childrens-enrollment-report.pdf

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