Child Maltreatment

In 2020, Washington had 102,642 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 41,795 were referred for investigation.¹

There were 3,967 child victims of abuse or neglect in Washington in 2020, at a rate of 2.4 children per 1,000. This translates to a 16.0% decrease since 2016.²

Of the 3,967 children, 1,851 were first time victims.³

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 385 of the 3,967 cases.⁴

Types of Maltreatment Victims, 2020

- 84% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2020 were parents of the child. 16% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.⁵
- 51% of Washington’s child victims in 2019 were female while 48% were male.⁶

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2020, Washington reported 290 infants who were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.⁷
- Washington reported 88 plans of safe care for screened-in infants.⁸
Child fatalities increased in 2020 from 25 in 2019 to 14 in 2020.xi

Washington reported 33 total child victims of sex trafficking.xii

2,382 victims received post-response services while 3,725 non-victims received post-response services as well.xiii

Foster Care and Adoptions

- 16,582 total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2020.
- 9,616 were in care on the day of September 30th, 2020.
- 4,308 children entered care during the 2020 FY while 5,493 exited during the same year.
- 1,425 of Washington’s children were adopted while 2,803 were waiting to be adopted.xv

There was a 11.9% decrease in the number of children in care between 2019 and 2020. Adoptions from the system decreased 1% from 2017.xvi

184 children in Washington aged out and exited foster care in 2020. This is a decrease from 180 in 2019 and represents an 2.2% decrease.xvii

- Children in foster care in 2020 spent an average of 26.6 months in care.xviii
- The average length of stay in Washington for children waiting to be adopted from foster care is 36.9 months.xix
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2020 was 7.1 years old.xxx
- The average age of adopted children was 6.0 years old.xxxi
Data from 2019 shows that 4,634 children in foster care in Washington were living with non-relatives while 3,541 stayed with a relative (See Pie Chart). xxii

510 children were staying in group homes while 105 children were classified as runaways. xxiii

4% of households in Washington in 2020 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 13.1 months. xxv

Child Poverty
Washington had 429,000 children in 2019 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 grew from 54,305 in 2019 to 61,589 in 2020. This represents an 13.4% increase. xxviii

The state spent $47,249,609 on WIC in 2021, serving 122,972 people. This represents a .43% decrease in total participants and a 3.3% increase in spending. xxix

790,050 people in Washington were food insecure in 2019, including 230,440 children who struggled with hunger. xxxi

30.0% of households receiving SNAP benefits in Washington in 2019 had children. xxxii
Health
Washington had 5,456 low birth-weight babies born in 2019 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 6.4% of infants born in Washington in 2019.xxxiv

Washington had a total of 7,172 preterm births in 2019, meaning completed less than 37 weeks of gestation. 7.9% of all white babies were born premature while 9.5% of all black babies arrived prematurely in 2019. The total premature birth rate was 8.5%.xxxv

There were 2,788 births to mothers aged 15-19 in Washington in 2019, representing a rate of 13 in every 1,000 teen girls.xxxvi

365 infants under one died in Washington in 2019, representing an infant mortality rate of 4.3 per 1,000.xxxvii

Public Health Insurance Coverage for Children, 2020

- Medicaid: 8%
- CHIP: 6%
- Uninsured: 86%

3.1% of Washington’s children had no health insurance in 2019. This represents 54,000 children. Washington is a Medicaid expansion state.xxxix

815,701 children in Washington were enrolled in Medicaid in 2020. This represents 0.5% decrease from 2019.xi

80,322 children in Washington were in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020. This represents an 10.9% decrease from 2019.xii
Juvenile Justice System
- There were 10,101 total arrests for children under 18 in Washington in 2019.
- 168 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 1,905 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 852 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.
- 693 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Washington in 2019. This is a decrease from 834 kids in 2017, representing a 16.9% decline.

Teens & Youth
- 24,000 (7%) of Washington’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2019.
- In 2020, there were 18 reports of children in Washington aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 54 reports of suicide among children aged 15-19.
- 66 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Washington in 2020.

Child Welfare Services Funding
Washington spent $606,653,148.58 on child welfare services in 2018. Child welfare services are all of the direct and administrative services that state agencies provide to children and families. $277,567,062.09 were allocated from the federal government and $320,015,161.74 came from state and local funds.

Federal Funding Sources

The breakdown of the $277,567,062.09 in federal funding received in Washington in 2018 (See Pie Chart).
- $8,225,554 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
- $50,026,319 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.
- Washington’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2020 was $41,843,503.
Washington’s Children 2022


xvi Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xx Ibid.

xii Ibid.


xxi Ibid.


xx Ibid

xxi Ibid.

xxii Ibid


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xxxiii Ibid.


xli Ibid


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