

# Child Support Program

SFY

# 2024

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The Division of Child Support delivers child support services, including the establishment of parentage and the establishment, modification and enforcement of child support orders (financial and medical) so families have the resources they need for children to thrive.

ESA Briefing  
Book

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## Child Support Program Overview

The Child Support program (established under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act) provides services for the establishment of paternity and the establishment, modification and enforcement of child support orders to help families become or remain economically secure.

Three types of cases make up the Title IV-D child support program:

- **Current Assistance** – People receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Title IV-E Foster Care.
- **Former Assistance** – People who previously received TANF or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or Title IV-E Foster Care.
- **Never Assistance** – People who have never received TANF/AFDC or Title IV-E Foster Care. Never Assistance cases include Medicaid only, child care only, and state-only foster care cases.

The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 awards incentives to state child support programs based on their performance on five measures:

1. Paternity establishment
2. Order establishment
3. Current support collected
4. Cases paying toward arrears
5. Cost effectiveness

The Child Support Incentive Scorecard included in this chapter shows Division of Child Support (DCS) outcomes on the five measures over the past two federal fiscal years. Information is presented by federal fiscal year (FFY) because that is the timeframe used for awarding incentives earned by the state's child support program.

Cost avoidance, one of the indirect benefits of the child support enforcement program, is measured by reductions in public expenditures in cash assistance, food assistance and Medicaid for families. Washington state studies have shown that a dependable stream of child support income for custodial parents and medical insurance coverage for children helps families increase their level of financial stability and independence, leading to less reliance on public assistance programs and greater economic security.

Additional information, including the eligibility criteria, funding sources, and services/benefits provided, is available in the **Program Descriptions** section of the Briefing Book.

### TECHNICAL NOTES

**DATA SOURCES:** Data for this chapter was based on ESA Division of Child Support's Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) - September 2024 caseload. Data for incentive payments are provided by DCS.

**DATA NOTE:**

- Percentages may not add up to expected totals due to rounding.

## Child Support Program Highlights, SFY 2024

- The average monthly child support caseload decreased by 4%, from 256,014 in SFY 2023 to 245,881 in SFY 2024. Within this caseload, average monthly Current Assistance cases decreased by 4% from 30,230 in SFY 2023 to 29,033 in SFY 2024; Former Assistance cases decreased by 3% from 136,332 to 132,224; and Never Assistance cases decreased by 5.4% from 89,452 to 84,625.
  - The child support program collected a total of \$627.5 million in SFY 2024.
  - The total cost avoidance in SFY 2024 was \$185.6 million. Of the total, \$107.8 million (58.1%) was for the Medicaid program, \$50.7 million (27.3%) was for the Basic Food program, and \$27 million (14.6%) was for the TANF program.
  - An Acknowledgment of Parentage (AOP) is a legal form that establishes a parent-child relationship or “parentage.” By filing this form, a second parent is added to a child’s birth certificate. The vast majority are signed by unmarried birth mothers/parents and a second parent. On rare occasion, some parents already on a birth certificate through marriage or registered domestic partnership may choose to file an AOP for use outside of Washington to prove parentage. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) reported 25,218 births to unmarried birth mothers/parents and, of those births, 19,771 (78.4%) of mothers/birth parents and a second parent jointly signed and filed Washington state AOP forms. The vast majority of these acknowledgments were signed at the hospital because of the efforts of the Parentage and Paternity Program.

## Child Support Incentive<sup>1</sup> Scorecard, FFY 2023<sup>2</sup> and FFY 2024<sup>3</sup>

| Measure                            | Goal Needed to Obtain Maximum Incentive Funding | Actual Performance |        | Estimated Percentage of Maximum Incentive Reached |      |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------|---|------|
|                                    |   | 2023               | 2024   | 2023  | 2024 |
| Paternity Establishment Percentage | 80%   | 95.6%              | 95.8%  | 100%  | 100% |
| Support Order Establishment        | 80%   | 91.0%              | 89.9%  | 100%  | 100% |
| Current Collections                | 80%   | 66.1%              | 65.8%  | 76%   | 75%  |
| Arrearage Collections              | 80%   | 61.6%              | 61.7%  | 71%   | 71%  |
| Cost Effectiveness                 | \$5.00  | \$3.86             | \$3.12 | 70%   | 60%  |

### Incentive Measure Formulas Used by the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement

**Paternity establishment percentage:** Number of children in the caseload in the FFY or as of the end of the FFY who were born out-of-wedlock (BOW) with paternity established or acknowledged divided by number of children BOW in the caseload as of the end of the preceding FFY.

**Support order establishment:** Number of IV-D cases with support orders divided by number of IV-D cases.

**Current collections:** Amount collected for current support in IV-D cases divided by amount owed for current support in IV-D cases.

**Arrearage collections:** Number of IV-D cases paying toward arrears divided by number of IV-D cases with arrears due.

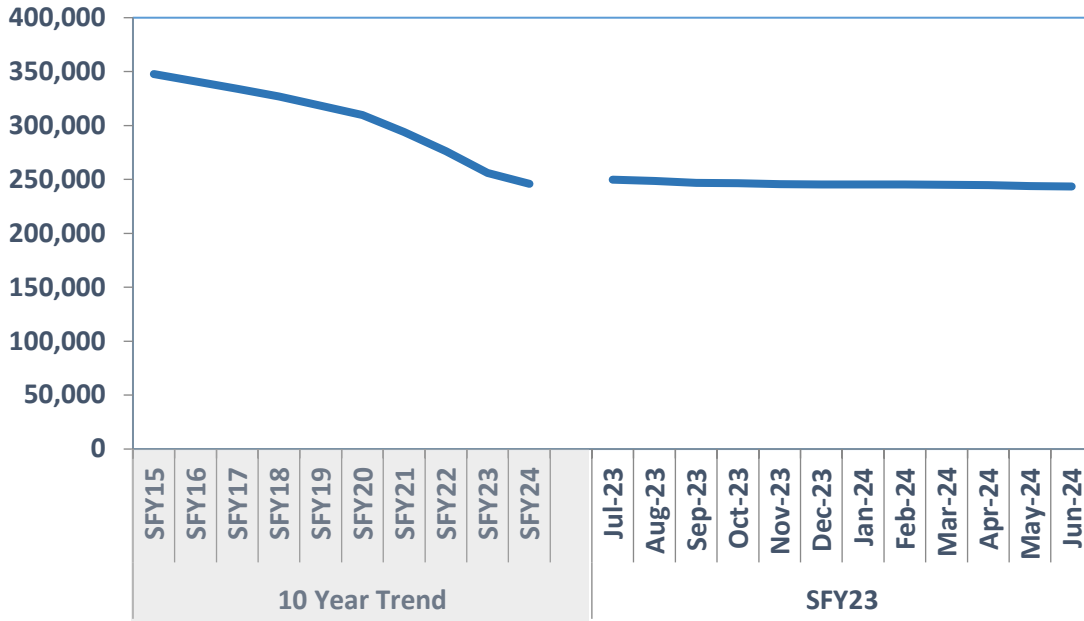
**Cost-effectiveness:** Total IV-D dollars collected divided by total IV-D dollars expended.

<sup>1</sup> DCS incentive payments for FFY 2023 are based on DCS actual FFY 2023 performance and Office of Child Support Services FFY 2023 preliminary performance results for all other states. DCS incentive payments for FFY 2024 are based on DCS actual FFY 2024 performance and OCSS FFY 2024 preliminary performance results for all other states. Data source: DCS Fiscal Office.

<sup>2</sup> FFY 2023 data is from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Support Services 2022 Preliminary Report.

<sup>3</sup> FFY 2024 data is preliminary based on unaudited federal reports.

### Child Support Caseload, SFY 2015 – SFY 2024

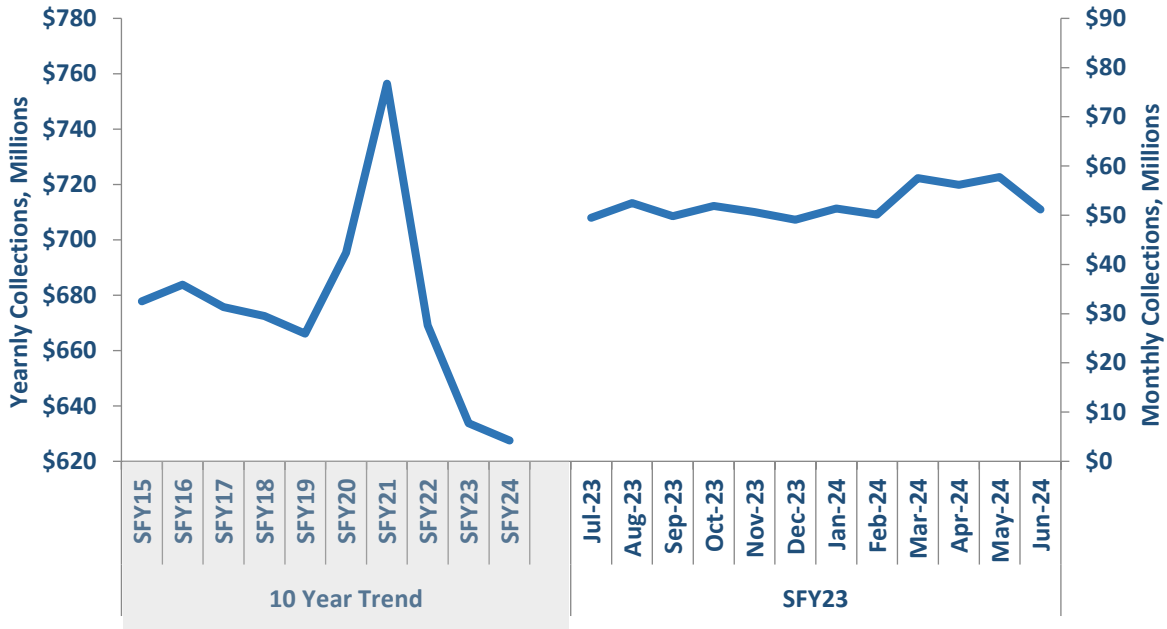


| SFY   | Monthly Average Caseload | SFY   | Monthly Average Caseload |
|-------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| SFY15 | 347,740                  | SFY20 | 309,616                  |
| SFY16 | 340,919                  | SFY21 | 294,069                  |
| SFY17 | 334,027                  | SFY22 | 276,267                  |
| SFY18 | 326,923                  | SFY23 | 256,014                  |
| SFY19 | 318,444                  | SFY24 | 245,881                  |

| SFY 2024                         | TANF/Foster Care | Former Assistance | Never Assistance | Total IV-D Caseload |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| July                             | 29,142           | 134,625           | 85,925           | 249,692             |
| August                           | 28,130           | 134,834           | 85,660           | 248,624             |
| September                        | 28,938           | 133,248           | 84,761           | 246,947             |
| October                          | 29,050           | 132,833           | 84,617           | 246,500             |
| November                         | 28,678           | 132,585           | 84,393           | 245,656             |
| December                         | 29,185           | 131,870           | 84,321           | 245,376             |
| January                          | 29,229           | 131,864           | 84,387           | 245,480             |
| February                         | 29,020           | 131,810           | 84,404           | 245,234             |
| March                            | 29,406           | 131,236           | 84,301           | 244,943             |
| April                            | 29,440           | 131,022           | 84,351           | 244,813             |
| May                              | 29,158           | 130,476           | 84,209           | 243,843             |
| June                             | 29,015           | 130,281           | 84,168           | 243,464             |
| Mo. Avg.                         | 29,033           | 132,224           | 84,625           | 245,881             |
| Annual Unduplicated <sup>4</sup> | 53,374           | 158,607           | 95,288           | 293,826             |

<sup>4</sup> The number of annual unduplicated cases is obtained by counting the number of unique cases served by DCS so that an individual case that spans multiple months in the SFY is counted only once.

### Child Support Collections, SFY 2015 – SFY 2024



| SFY   | Collections   | SFY   | Collections   |
|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|
| SFY15 | \$677,763,250 | SFY20 | \$695,311,638 |
| SFY16 | \$683,807,632 | SFY21 | \$756,412,192 |
| SFY17 | \$675,702,583 | SFY22 | \$669,143,007 |
| SFY18 | \$672,521,073 | SFY23 | \$633,754,215 |
| SFY19 | \$666,175,348 | SFY24 | \$627,535,615 |

| SFY 2024     | TANF/Foster Care    | Former Assistance    | Never Assistance     | Total IV-D Collections |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| July         | \$1,747,595         | \$16,530,766         | \$31,205,331         | \$49,483,691           |
| August       | \$1,887,145         | \$17,831,034         | \$32,751,358         | \$52,469,537           |
| September    | \$1,681,640         | \$16,414,277         | \$31,698,129         | \$49,794,046           |
| October      | \$1,843,504         | \$17,532,282         | \$32,497,055         | \$51,872,841           |
| November     | \$1,817,397         | \$16,800,767         | \$32,021,472         | \$50,639,636           |
| December     | \$1,671,622         | \$16,256,099         | \$31,157,133         | \$49,084,853           |
| January      | \$1,749,893         | \$17,123,703         | \$32,504,708         | \$51,378,303           |
| February     | \$1,715,698         | \$16,567,783         | \$31,857,776         | \$50,141,258           |
| March        | \$2,493,266         | \$20,357,954         | \$34,694,651         | \$57,545,870           |
| April        | \$2,155,480         | \$18,951,967         | \$35,065,319         | \$56,172,766           |
| May          | \$2,283,706         | \$20,114,940         | \$35,360,435         | \$57,759,080           |
| June         | \$1,982,971         | \$17,132,585         | \$32,078,178         | \$51,193,733           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$23,029,917</b> | <b>\$211,614,155</b> | <b>\$392,891,543</b> | <b>\$627,535,615</b>   |

Clients with DCS Cases by County of Residence, June 2024 Snapshot<sup>5</sup>

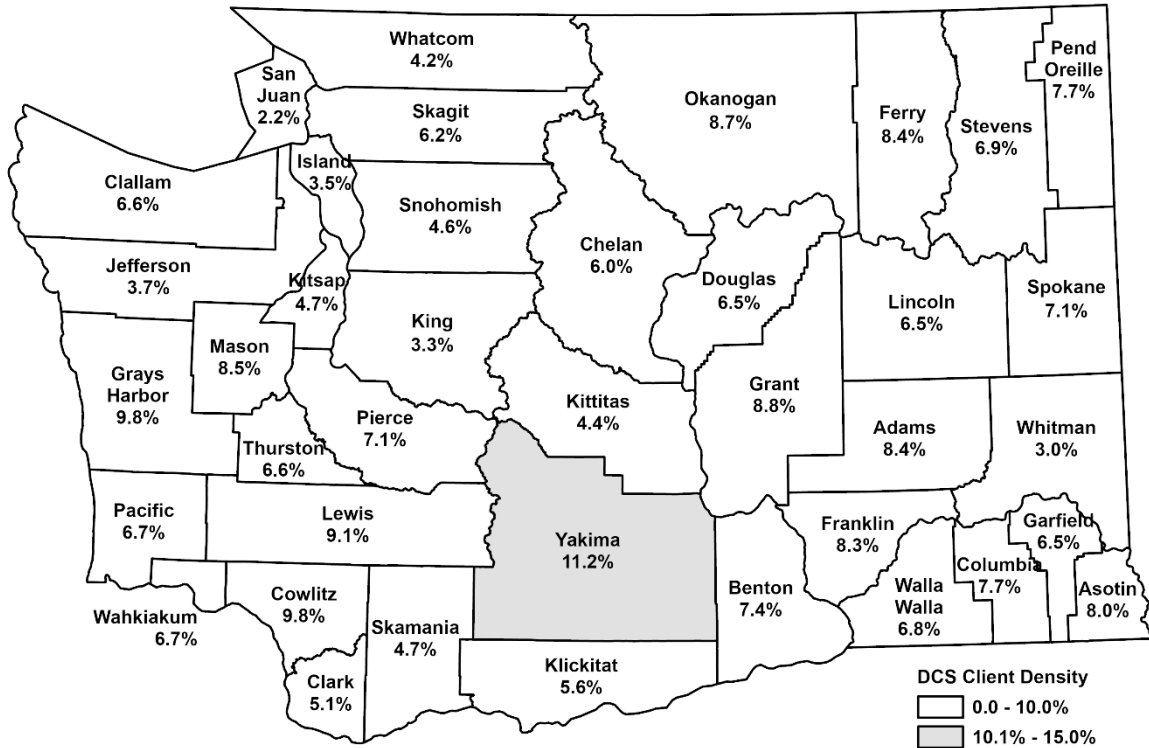
| County             | Clients        | Population Estimate | % of Residents Served | County       | Clients | Population Estimate | % of Residents Served |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Adams              | 1,795          | 21,475              | 8.4%                  | Lewis        | 7,742   | 84,950              | 9.1%                  |
| Asotin             | 1,811          | 22,725              | 8.0%                  | Lincoln      | 737     | 11,300              | 6.5%                  |
| Benton             | 16,220         | 217,850             | 7.4%                  | Mason        | 5,712   | 67,475              | 8.5%                  |
| Chelan             | 4,967          | 82,300              | 6.0%                  | Okanogan     | 3,768   | 43,200              | 8.7%                  |
| Clallam            | 5,205          | 78,550              | 6.6%                  | Pacific      | 1,596   | 23,950              | 6.7%                  |
| Clark              | 27,508         | 536,300             | 5.1%                  | Pend Oreille | 1,070   | 13,850              | 7.7%                  |
| Columbia           | 308            | 3,975               | 7.7%                  | Pierce       | 67,214  | 952,600             | 7.1%                  |
| Cowlitz            | 11,142         | 113,900             | 9.8%                  | San Juan     | 408     | 18,475              | 2.2%                  |
| Douglas            | 2,949          | 45,150              | 6.5%                  | Skagit       | 8,321   | 133,300             | 6.2%                  |
| Ferry              | 615            | 7,350               | 8.4%                  | Skamania     | 569     | 12,075              | 4.7%                  |
| Franklin           | 8,534          | 102,300             | 8.3%                  | Snohomish    | 40,189  | 867,100             | 4.6%                  |
| Garfield           | 150            | 2,325               | 6.5%                  | Spokane      | 39,680  | 559,400             | 7.1%                  |
| Grant              | 9,215          | 105,300             | 8.8%                  | Stevens      | 3,279   | 47,650              | 6.9%                  |
| Grays Harbor       | 7,557          | 77,400              | 9.8%                  | Thurston     | 20,271  | 307,000             | 6.6%                  |
| Island             | 3,119          | 88,650              | 3.5%                  | Wahkiakum    | 304     | 4,550               | 6.7%                  |
| Jefferson          | 1,240          | 33,700              | 3.7%                  | Walla Walla  | 4,331   | 63,375              | 6.8%                  |
| King               | 77,387         | 2,378,100           | 3.3%                  | Whatcom      | 9,997   | 238,000             | 4.2%                  |
| Kitsap             | 13,559         | 286,100             | 4.7%                  | Whitman      | 1,480   | 48,750              | 3.0%                  |
| Kittitas           | 2,120          | 48,600              | 4.4%                  | Yakima       | 29,376  | 263,200             | 11.2%                 |
| Klickitat          | 1,302          | 23,450              | 5.6%                  |              |         |                     |                       |
| <b>State Total</b> | <b>442,747</b> | <b>8,035,700</b>    | <b>5.5%</b>           |              |         |                     |                       |

<sup>5</sup> Population estimate source: Office of Financial Management (OFM) population estimates



# Percentage of Total Population with a DCS Case by County, June 2024 Snapshot

Percentage of Residents Served by DCS During June 2024

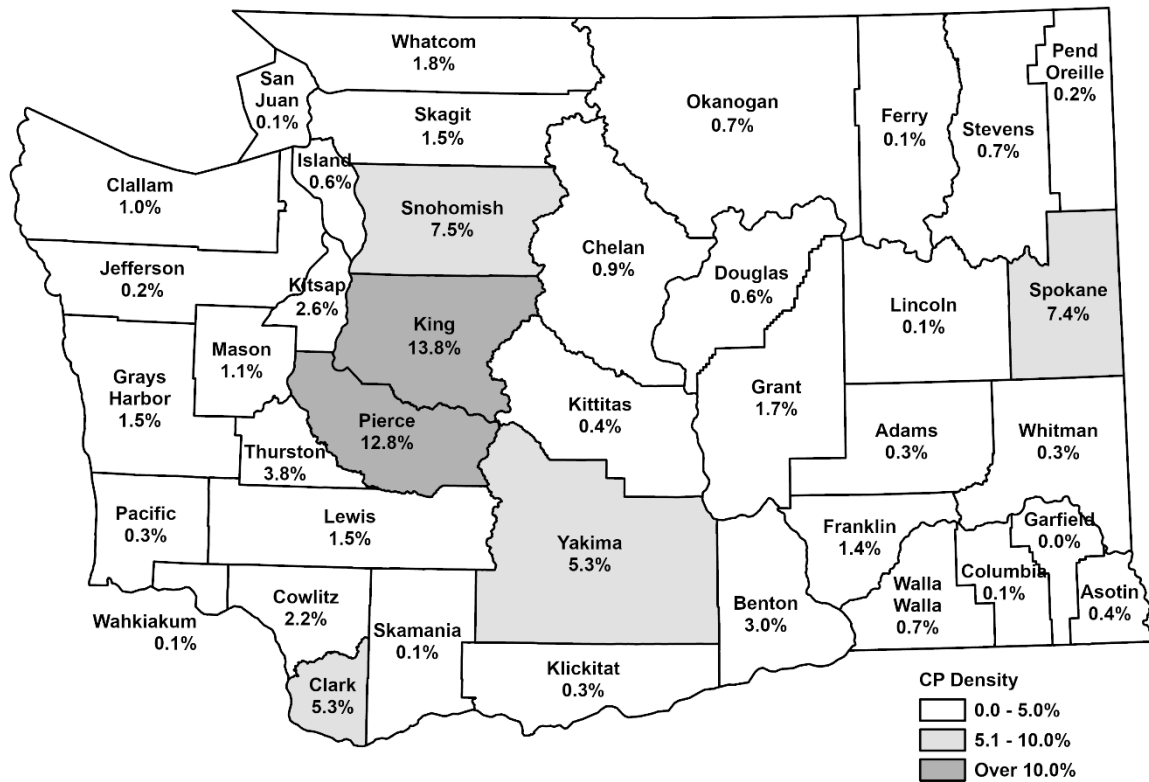


**Note:** The percentage of residents served is obtained by dividing the number of DCS clients in a county during June 2024 by the OFM 2024 County Population estimate.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/EMAPS - Aug. 2024

## Percentage of Custodial Parents (CP) by County, June 2024 Snapshot

Percentage of Custodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2024

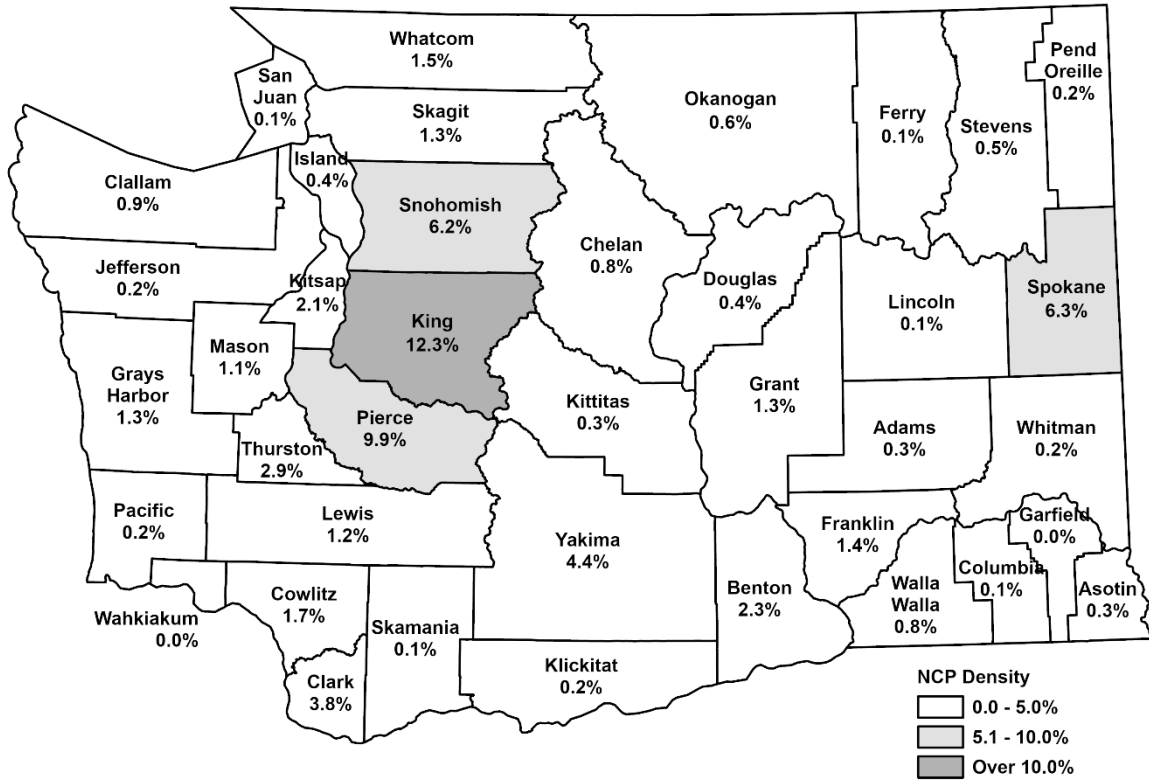


Note: 17.7% of CPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/EMAPS - Aug. 2024

# Percentage of Noncustodial Parents (NCP) by County, June 2024 Snapshot

Percentage of Noncustodial Parents by County in Washington State: June 2024



Note: 32.5% of NCPs are out of state or do not have valid county address code.

Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/EMAPS - Aug. 2024

### Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2024

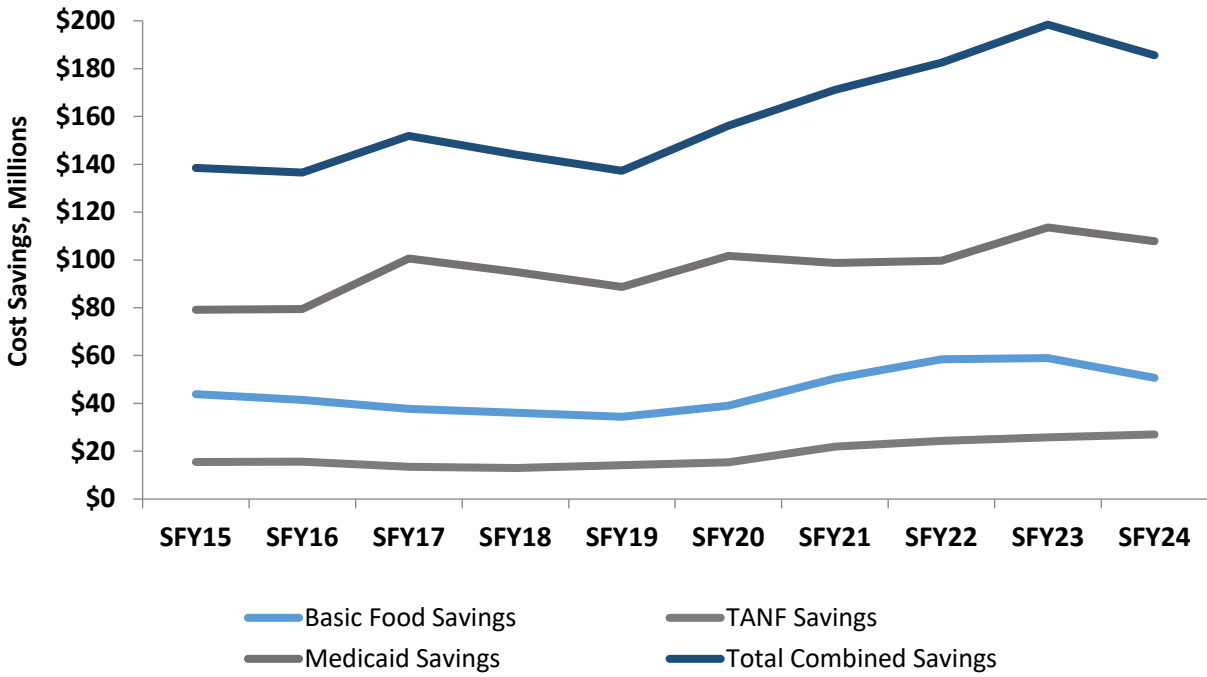
| SFY 2024     | Basic Food   |  |                                       | TANF   |  |                                 |
|--------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
|              | Average CR <sup>6</sup><br>Basic Food<br>Expenditure | Average CI <sup>7</sup><br>Basic Food<br>Expenditure | Total Basic<br>Food Cost<br>Avoidance | Average CR <sup>5</sup><br>TANF<br>Expenditure | Average CI <sup>6</sup><br>TANF<br>Expenditure | Total TANF<br>Cost<br>Avoidance |
| July         | \$107.32   | \$184.24   | \$4,051,446                           | \$11.11  | \$49.11  | \$2,007,085                     |
| August       | \$106.82   | \$184.48   | \$4,031,366                           | \$11.33  | \$49.88  | \$1,989,031                     |
| September    | \$106.92   | \$185.16   | \$4,006,982                           | \$11.36  | \$49.91  | \$1,986,503                     |
| October      | \$113.39   | \$197.10   | \$4,368,411                           | \$10.88  | \$51.10  | \$2,121,667                     |
| November     | \$112.97   | \$195.91   | \$4,262,451                           | \$11.48  | \$53.68  | \$2,137,642                     |
| December     | \$112.94   | \$195.84   | \$4,219,097                           | \$11.41  | \$54.52  | \$2,197,253                     |
| January      | \$112.44   | \$194.89   | \$4,206,247                           | \$12.56  | \$59.45  | \$2,398,548                     |
| February     | \$112.37   | \$196.50   | \$4,304,145                           | \$12.41  | \$59.18  | \$2,370,578                     |
| March        | \$112.59   | \$196.30   | \$4,318,344                           | \$12.99  | \$59.48  | \$2,373,366                     |
| April        | \$112.60   | \$197.32   | \$4,396,032                           | \$13.13  | \$61.29  | \$2,489,678                     |
| May          | \$114.89   | \$199.80   | \$4,352,594                           | \$13.56  | \$63.50  | \$2,537,881                     |
| June         | \$113.58   | \$196.96   | \$4,228,638                           | \$13.52  | \$61.40  | \$2,410,576                     |
| <b>Total</b> |  |  | <b>\$50,745,755</b>                   |  |  | <b>\$27,019,808</b>             |

| SFY 2024     | Medicaid   |   |                                  |
|--------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
|              | Total Custodial<br>Parent Medicaid<br>Cost Avoidance | Total Child<br>Medicaid Cost<br>Avoidance | Total Medicaid<br>Cost Avoidance |
| July         | \$4,521,498  | \$4,878,101                               | \$9,399,599                      |
| August       | \$4,023,638  | \$4,782,509                               | \$8,806,147                      |
| September    | \$4,151,856  | \$4,531,389                               | \$8,683,245                      |
| October      | \$4,203,889  | \$4,909,389                               | \$9,113,278                      |
| November     | \$4,349,217  | \$4,747,440                               | \$9,096,657                      |
| December     | \$3,851,856  | \$4,857,042                               | \$8,708,899                      |
| January      | \$4,934,434  | \$5,119,576                               | \$10,054,010                     |
| February     | \$4,453,688  | \$4,927,316                               | \$9,381,003                      |
| March        | \$4,749,214  | \$4,916,863                               | \$9,666,077                      |
| April        | \$4,518,357  | \$4,954,617                               | \$9,472,973                      |
| May          | \$3,708,452  | \$4,802,873                               | \$8,511,326                      |
| June         | \$3,323,785  | \$3,629,045                               | \$6,952,831                      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$50,789,885</b>                                  | <b>\$57,056,160</b>                       | <b>\$107,846,044</b>             |

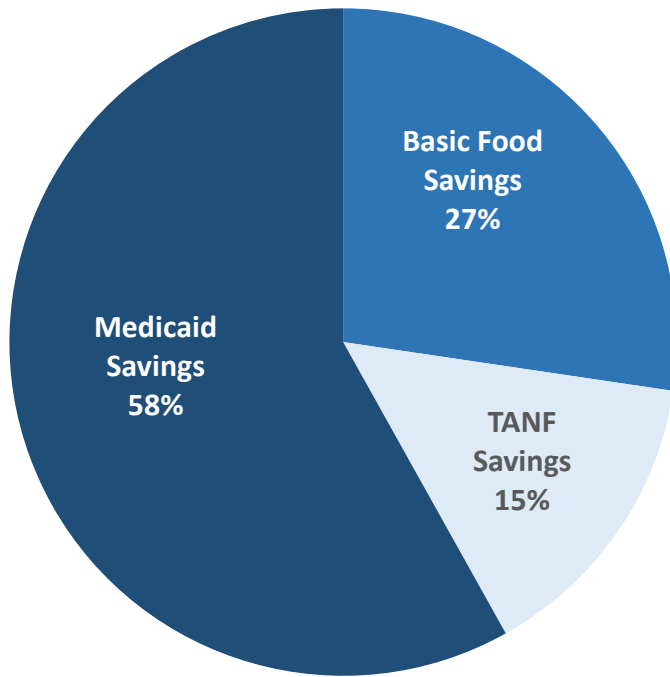
<sup>6</sup> CR: Custodial parents with regular child support payments. Regular child support payments are defined as summed monthly order amount more than \$0 and summed total arrearage debt less than twice the summed monthly order amount.

<sup>7</sup> CI: Custodial parents without regular child support payments.

### Child Support Cost Avoidance by Source, SFY 2015 – SFY 2024



Sources of \$185.6 Million in Child Support Cost Avoidance, SFY 2024



### Child Support Tribal Caseload<sup>8</sup>, SFY 2024

| SFY 2024  | Total Child Support TANF/Foster Care | Child Support Tribal TANF/Foster Care | % of Child Support Tribal TANF/Foster Care | Total Child Support Former Assistance | Tribal Child Support Former Assistance | % of Tribal Former Assistance |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| July      | 29,142                               | 1,918                                 | 6.6%                                       | 134,625                               | 5,237                                  | 3.9%                          |
| August    | 28,130                               | 1,905                                 | 6.8%                                       | 134,834                               | 5,211                                  | 3.9%                          |
| September | 28,938                               | 1,891                                 | 6.5%                                       | 133,248                               | 5,154                                  | 3.9%                          |
| October   | 29,050                               | 1,896                                 | 6.5%                                       | 132,833                               | 5,135                                  | 3.9%                          |
| November  | 28,678                               | 1,867                                 | 6.5%                                       | 132,585                               | 5,141                                  | 3.9%                          |
| December  | 29,185                               | 1,879                                 | 6.4%                                       | 131,870                               | 5,106                                  | 3.9%                          |
| January   | 29,229                               | 1,866                                 | 6.4%                                       | 131,864                               | 5,080                                  | 3.9%                          |
| February  | 29,020                               | 1,875                                 | 6.5%                                       | 131,810                               | 5,067                                  | 3.8%                          |
| March     | 29,406                               | 1,885                                 | 6.4%                                       | 131,236                               | 5,030                                  | 3.8%                          |
| April     | 29,440                               | 1,875                                 | 6.4%                                       | 131,022                               | 5,014                                  | 3.8%                          |
| May       | 29,158                               | 1,871                                 | 6.4%                                       | 130,476                               | 4,983                                  | 3.8%                          |
| June      | 29,015                               | 1,852                                 | 6.4%                                       | 130,281                               | 4,999                                  | 3.8%                          |
| Mo. Avg.  | 29,033                               | 1,882                                 | 6.5%                                       | 132,224                               | 5,096                                  | 3.9%                          |

| SFY 2024  | Total Child Support Never Assistance | Child Support Tribal Never Assistance | % of Child Support Tribal Never Assistance | Total Child Support | Total Child Support Tribal | % of Child Support Tribal |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| July      | 85,925                               | 1,605                                 | 1.9%                                       | 249,692             | 8,760                      | 3.5%                      |
| August    | 85,660                               | 1,600                                 | 1.9%                                       | 248,624             | 8,716                      | 3.5%                      |
| September | 84,761                               | 1,592                                 | 1.9%                                       | 246,947             | 8,637                      | 3.5%                      |
| October   | 84,617                               | 1,603                                 | 1.9%                                       | 246,500             | 8,634                      | 3.5%                      |
| November  | 84,393                               | 1,594                                 | 1.9%                                       | 245,656             | 8,602                      | 3.5%                      |
| December  | 84,321                               | 1,591                                 | 1.9%                                       | 245,376             | 8,576                      | 3.5%                      |
| January   | 84,387                               | 1,595                                 | 1.9%                                       | 245,480             | 8,541                      | 3.5%                      |
| February  | 84,404                               | 1,590                                 | 1.9%                                       | 245,234             | 8,532                      | 3.5%                      |
| March     | 84,301                               | 1,603                                 | 1.9%                                       | 244,943             | 8,518                      | 3.5%                      |
| April     | 84,351                               | 1,600                                 | 1.9%                                       | 244,813             | 8,489                      | 3.5%                      |
| May       | 84,209                               | 1,588                                 | 1.9%                                       | 243,843             | 8,442                      | 3.5%                      |
| June      | 84,168                               | 1,586                                 | 1.9%                                       | 243,464             | 8,437                      | 3.5%                      |
| Mo. Avg.  | 84,625                               | 1,596                                 | 1.9%                                       | 245,881             | 8,574                      | 3.5%                      |

<sup>8</sup> Starting in SFY 2023, the methodology used to identify tribal caseloads was adjusted in order to more accurately reflect the entire tribal caseload throughout the year.

## Child Support Tribal Collections, SFY 2024

| SFY 2024     | TANF/Foster Care | Former Assistance  | Never Assistance   | Total Child Support Collections |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| July         | \$65,580         | \$312,157          | \$288,059          | \$665,796                       |
| August       | \$67,898         | \$311,673          | \$307,456          | \$687,026                       |
| September    | \$67,322         | \$265,646          | \$293,360          | \$626,328                       |
| October      | \$58,700         | \$277,579          | \$311,141          | \$647,421                       |
| November     | \$57,574         | \$272,540          | \$283,924          | \$614,038                       |
| December     | \$60,223         | \$313,498          | \$290,843          | \$664,563                       |
| January      | \$49,732         | \$253,603          | \$308,797          | \$612,131                       |
| February     | \$60,121         | \$366,391          | \$354,445          | \$780,957                       |
| March        | \$93,996         | \$356,189          | \$357,227          | \$807,412                       |
| April        | \$78,083         | \$322,776          | \$330,582          | \$731,441                       |
| May          | \$73,259         | \$376,494          | \$369,805          | \$819,558                       |
| June         | \$71,716         | \$310,403          | \$346,535          | \$728,654                       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$804,203</b> | <b>\$3,738,948</b> | <b>\$3,842,174</b> | <b>\$8,385,326</b>              |

## Child Support Demographics, June 2024 Snapshot

| Characteristic | Noncustodial Parents <sup>9</sup> |               | Custodial Parents <sup>10</sup> |               | Children       |               |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
|                | # of NCPs                         | Percent       | # of CPs                        | Percent       | # of Children  | Percent       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187,947</b>                    | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>207,959</b>                  | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>208,712</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

| Gender                      | Noncustodial Parents |       | Custodial Parents |       | Children |       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>Female</b>               | 27,548               | 14.7% | 184,252           | 88.6% | 102,605  | 49.2% |
| <b>Male</b>                 | 160,124              | 85.2% | 23,124            | 11.1% | 106,066  | 50.8% |
| <b>Unknown<sup>11</sup></b> | 275                  | 0.1%  | 583               | 0.3%  | 41       | <0.1% |

| Age of Parent                       | Noncustodial Parents |       | Custodial Parents |       | Children |  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------|--|
| <b>&lt;26 Years Old</b>             | 5,124                | 2.7%  | 7,348             | 3.5%  | N/A      |  |
| <b>26 – 35 Years Old</b>            | 45,858               | 24.4% | 52,867            | 25.4% |          |  |
| <b>36 – 45 Years Old</b>            | 77,303               | 41.1% | 81,575            | 39.2% |          |  |
| <b>46 – 55 Years Old</b>            | 41,357               | 22.0% | 42,067            | 20.2% |          |  |
| <b>56+ Years Old</b>                | 14,955               | 8.0%  | 23,652            | 11.4% |          |  |
| <b>Not Reported/ Unidentifiable</b> | 3,350                | 1.8%  | 450               | 0.2%  |          |  |

| Age of Children                     | Children |       |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| <b>&lt;6 Year Old</b>               | 33,079   | 15.8% |
| <b>6 – 10 Years Old</b>             | 56,819   | 27.2% |
| <b>11 – 15 Years Old</b>            | 78,607   | 37.7% |
| <b>16 – 18 Years Old</b>            | 37,715   | 18.1% |
| <b>19+ Years Old</b>                | 2,465    | 1.2%  |
| <b>Not Reported/ Unidentifiable</b> | 27       | <0.1% |

| Years             | Noncustodial Parents | Custodial Parents | Children |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <b>Mean Age</b>   | 42.2                 | 42.7              | 11.4     |
| <b>Median Age</b> | 41.5                 | 41.0              | 12.0     |

<sup>9</sup> A noncustodial parent (NCP) may also be a custodial parent (CP) on another case.

<sup>10</sup> A CP may also be an NCP on another case.

<sup>11</sup> Currently, the SEMS system has a limited gender field capacity, which means that non-binary customers will be included in 'Unknown' as well as customers that do not have clearly identified gender designation.



## Special Grants/Projects

**Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting (EMRP)** – The Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) awarded DCS \$1 million dollars to participate in the second cohort of the Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting demonstration. The goal of the EMRP project is to provide youth and young adults with opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills, and access to resources that are likely to lead to success in their pursuit of life goals, economic mobility, and responsible parenting. DCS is collaborating with high schools and fatherhood organizations to deliver child support and responsible parenting curriculum to teens and young adults and connect them with resources in their area.

**Safe Access for Victims' Economic Security (SAVES)** – The SAVES demonstration aims to increase safe access to child support and parenting-time services for domestic violence victims/survivors. Over the course of the five-year project, DCS will work with OCSS, experts, and individuals with lived experience to review policy and procedure, develop outreach materials explaining the safety measures available within the child support program, and pilot the use of specialized case management strategies for victims/survivors.

**The Alternative Solutions Program** – DCS implemented this statewide program in July 2014 to assist parents struggling to meet their child support obligations. The program connects these parents to community resources that can help them remove barriers to paying child support, such as work-related training, education, and supportive services. Between July 2014 and June 2024, the voluntary program received 8,243 referrals. During SFY 2023, Alternative Solutions served 927 parents. The program maintains a database of more than 4,600 resources with a version available to the public, allowing any Washingtonian to connect with local community resources. Parents, field staff, prosecuting attorney staff, and community partners embrace the program. This cooperative effort generates real-life success stories as parents work through barriers and meet their child support obligations.

**Tribal Partnerships** – Through mutual respect and trust, DCS and tribes have worked collaboratively for over 30 years to improve and provide child support services to Washington families. Currently, there are eight federally funded tribal child support programs and 11 Tribal TANF programs in the state. Additionally, Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) provide support to Native people in urban and rural areas. Partnerships are especially vital when the state or a tribe lacks jurisdiction to enforce child support. Intergovernmental and cooperative agreements allow DCS to offer federal enforcement remedies to tribal programs, and for tribal programs to provide remedies that would not otherwise be available to the state. Government-to-government efforts with tribes and tribal organizations promote tribal and state sovereignty and ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate services are being delivered to all American Indians and Alaska Natives in Washington state.

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## Voluntary Acknowledgments and Genetic Testing

### Parentage Program Background

The Parentage Program (originally known as the Paternity Affidavit Program) began in July 1989 as a partnership between the DCS and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). The program provides unmarried parents the opportunity to sign an Acknowledgment of Parentage form at the child's birth or a later date. Most Acknowledgment of Parentage forms are signed at a birthing hospital or midwifery practice. Based on its success of increasing paternity establishment using the voluntary acknowledgment and its cost effectiveness, Washington's program was soon recognized as a national best practice. In the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Congress required that every state implement a voluntary paternity establishment program based on Washington's model.

**Legal Requirements** – The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) created numerous state requirements, including the requirement that states afford all unmarried parents the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge paternity. Section 45 CFR 303.5 (g) provides the applicable federal regulations; RCW 70.58A.100 and Chapter 26.26A RCW are the applicable state laws.

A hospital, midwifery clinic, or other authorized entity must provide an opportunity for unmarried parents to sign an Acknowledgment of Parentage at the time of the child's birth. The parents are entitled to both a written statement of their rights and responsibilities (this is on the second page of the Acknowledgment form) and oral notice (a short video or 1-800 line). Upon receipt of a properly completed and notarized or witnessed Acknowledgment of Parentage form, the Department of Health must name the father/second parent on the child's birth certificate.

**Effects of the Acknowledgment of Parentage** – A properly signed and filed Acknowledgment of Parentage creates a legal determination of parentage immediately without the need for a court order. Parentage for a child of unmarried parents must be legally established before the child support order determining the noncustodial parent's financial and medical obligations. The determination of parentage afforded by this simple administrative process also provides other benefits, such as making a child eligible to participate in any available social security, veterans', life insurance, or health insurance benefits.

**Results** – The signed and filed Acknowledgment of Parentage allows DCS to establish a child support obligation quickly and at low cost. DCS is usually able to obtain a child support order in 90 days or less from the date the Department of Health files the Acknowledgment of Parentage, which is a much quicker and less costly process than establishing parentage through the courts. DCS saves taxpayers millions of dollars each year because of the administrative Parentage Program. In SFY 2024, parentage was established for 12,112 children, 85.4% of them by Acknowledgment of Parentage.

### **DCS Parentage and Paternity Partner Outreach**

DCS published and electronically distributed four editions of the Parentage and Paternity Newsletter in SFY 2024. The purpose of the newsletter is to share information about parentage and paternity with hospitals and other providers. Other DCS partners also subscribe to the newsletter.

In partnership with the Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics staff, DCS co-hosted two virtual “Provider Insider” meetings on the Microsoft Teams platform for staff from the state’s hospitals, midwifery clinics, and birth centers. Offered in October 2023, the presentations covered information about birth filing, birth corrections, the Acknowledgment of Parentage, and the Voluntary Paternity Testing Program. The Provider Insider presentations are offered annually to the state’s birthing providers.

### **Voluntary Paternity Testing Program**

DCS continues to operate the Voluntary Paternity Testing Program (VPTP). VPTP incorporates two strategies: reimbursement for notaries and no-cost genetic testing. The Acknowledgment of Parentage (AOP), Denial of Parentage (DOP), and Rescission of Parentage (ROP) forms, which have been in effect since January 1, 2019, give parents the option of signing in front of a witness or a notary. Some hospitals have opted to offer only the notary option to parents. DCS offers reimbursement to hospitals for the cost to add Notaries Public, which historically increased the opportunity for parents to sign an Acknowledgment. DCS also offers no-cost genetic testing to unmarried parents in a non-judicial setting. Through the VPTP, hospital staff and other birth providers can offer an application for genetic testing to unmarried parents. Completing genetic testing gives parents the ability to confirm they are the child’s biological parents before signing an Acknowledgment of Parentage.