

Caseload Exits at the Local Level:

The Fifth Year of FIP

**Catherine E. Born
Principal Investigator**

**Chris M. Herbst
Research Analyst**

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**Family Welfare Research and Training Group
University of Maryland School of Social Work
525 W. Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-706-5134**

This report was prepared by the Family Welfare Research and Training Group, School of Social Work, University of Maryland, 525 West Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 with support from its long time research partner, the Maryland Department of Human Resources.

For additional information about the report or the study, please contact Dr. Catherine Born at the School of Social Work (410.706.5134, cborn@ssw.umaryland.edu). For more information about welfare reform in Maryland, please contact Mr. Richard Larson at the Department of Human Resources (410.767.7150, rlarson@fia.dhr.state.md.us or welfarereformer@prodigy.net).

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Executive Summary

This is the sixth in a series of reports to examine the universe of cases that exited cash assistance in Maryland since the state's welfare reform program, the Family Investment Program (FIP), began in October 1996. This report looks at the fifth year of reform (October 2000 - September 2001), providing statewide and jurisdiction-specific information on all 31,088 cases that exited Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) during this 12 month period.¹ The report addresses two broad questions:

- **What are the statewide and jurisdictional trends in cash assistance case closings during the fifth year of welfare reform?**
- **For the state as a whole and in each local subdivision, what is the profile of cases which closed and what are the administrative reasons for case closure?**

Monthly administrative data on all 31,088 closing cases were examined to answer these questions. Specifically, information was obtained from the Client Automated Resource and Eligibility System (CARES), Maryland's automated management information system for public welfare and social service programs. In addition to total numbers of exiting cases in the state and each of its 24 local jurisdictions/subdivisions, information can be extracted from CARES on such case characteristics as size of the assistance unit, case composition, reasons for case closure, length of most recent welfare spell and age of youngest child in the assistance unit. Data are also available to profile exiting payees in terms of gender, racial/ethnic

¹ Comparable reports on the universe of welfare leavers for the first four years were issued in April 1998, June 1999, April 2000, and September 2001. A report reviewing the first three years was issued in December 2000. See: *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The First Year of FIP*; *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Second Year of FIP*; *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Third Year of FIP*; *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Fourth Year of FIP* and *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The First Three Years of FIP*. University of Maryland School of Social Work.

group, age, and age at birth of first child. Key findings from our review of these data for the 31,088 cases that left welfare during the fifth year of reform (October 2000 - September 2001) include the following:²

- Statewide, in year five there were 31,088 closings. While this is a sizable number, it is less than the number of closings for year four (n=31,482), year three (n=37,997), year two (n=40,773), and year one (n=41,212).
- Statewide, the general trend in year five was that of larger numbers of exits in the first and fourth quarters, followed closely by smaller numbers of exits in the third and second quarters, respectively. The largest number of exits was recorded in the fourth quarter (n=8,185), the fewest in the second quarter (n=7,268).
- In 21 of 24 jurisdictions, closings were very evenly distributed across each of the four quarters. In three jurisdictions (Baltimore and Charles Counties and Baltimore City) there is slightly more variation in case closings from quarter-to-quarter.
- For 19 of 24 jurisdictions, the locality's share of year five closures equaled or exceeded its share of the cash assistance caseload. The exceptions were Baltimore City and Caroline, Harford, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties. The largest disparity between share of caseload and share of case closings was in Prince George's County, which accounted for 11.3% of the total caseload, but 9.0% of the total case closures, a gap of -2.3%. This is the first year in which Baltimore City's caseload/case closings gap (-2.0%) was exceeded by another jurisdiction.
- Statewide, the typical exiting case in year five consisted of a two person assistance unit (37.7%) containing one adult (78.2%) and one child (45.8%). A substantial majority of cases (74.3%) had been on welfare for less than 1 year at the time of case closure. Conversely, just three percent of exiting cases had been receiving cash assistance for over five years at the time of exit.
- The typical payee in an exiting case was female (95.8%), African-American (80.0%), in her early 30s (median 32 years) and had given birth to her first child before the age of 21 (57.2%).

²A closing case or case closure is defined as an assistance unit which, at least once during the 12 month study period, ceased receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA, formerly Aid to Families with Dependent Children). That is, we count "cases" or families, rather than "closures" per se; for this reason, the number of closures we report may differ from the number reported by the Maryland Department of Human Resources for the same period.

A few intra-state differences in the profile of year five exiting cases and payees were observed. Some of the notable findings are presented below:

- Two parent families, while a small proportion of closing cases statewide (2.3%), accounted for at least five percent of all exiting cases in 8 jurisdictions: Allegany (8.2%), Caroline (5.8%), Cecil (6.7%), Frederick (5.3%), Garrett (20.8%), Montgomery (5.1%), Queen Anne's (6.0%), and St. Mary's (6.3%) counties.
- Child-only cases accounted for only 19.5% of statewide closures during year five, but for significantly larger shares of exits in three counties: Howard (33.1%), Kent (36.8%) and Worcester (33.0%).
- In every jurisdiction, two person assistance units were most common among year five exiters, comprising 37.7% of case closings statewide.
- The jurisdictional analysis showed little variation in payees' estimated age at the time of first birth; average age at first birth ranged from 21.19 years in Dorchester County to 24.13 years in Howard County.
- The proportion of caseheads who had their first child before age 18 was 25.8% for the state as a whole, but varied widely across counties, ranging from a low of 8.9% in Howard County to a high of 30.1% in Baltimore City.
- The proportion of exiting cases containing at least one child under age three was 39.4% for the entire state. This ranged from about one case in three in Howard County (30.5%) to three cases in five in Washington County (60.1%).
- Statewide, there were two primary administrative reasons for case closure: "no recertification/no redetermination" (n=8,372/31,088 or 26.9%) and "income above limit (including started work)" (n=6,236/31,088 or 20.1%). Together these two reasons accounted for nearly half (47%) of all closures recorded during the year.
- The vast majority (n=6,186/8,372 or 73.9%) of cases that closed for the reason "no recertification/no redetermination" were in Baltimore City and Prince George's County. Baltimore City accounted for three-fifths of all such closures in year five (n=5,204/8,372 or 62.2%), and Prince George's County accounted for one-tenth (n=982/8,372 or 11.1%).

- Statewide, about one in five closures (19.3%) in year five were due to the imposition of a sanction. This represents a pattern of small, but consistent increases over time: year four (18.5%), year three (11.7%), year two (11.7%), and year one (6.1%). As was true in all prior years, the vast majority (87.2%) of sanctions were for non-compliance with work requirements, rather than non-cooperation with child support.
- The vast majority of sanctions in year five were work-related and intra-state differences are evident. Work-related sanction represented over one-fifth of all case-closings in three counties: Baltimore County (22.6%), Calvert (27.0%), and Somerset (21.1%). In another seven jurisdictions, work sanctions represented between 15% and 20% of all case-closings: Cecil (17.3%), Garrett (15.8%), Howard (19.5%), Montgomery (16.6%), Queen Anne's (15.5%), Worcester (17.9%), and Baltimore City (19.6%). Child support sanctions were notable in Talbot (10.2%) and Garrett (5.8%) Counties.

These findings are generally consistent with those reported for the first four years of the program. Furthermore, this review suggests that two areas continue to warrant special attention: the progress of reform in Baltimore City and full family sanctioning. The caseload/closings gap in Prince George's County (-2.3%), with the state's second largest caseload, may also be an emerging area of concern.

In our reports on the first four years of welfare reform in Maryland, we called attention to two important findings about Baltimore City. First, in all four years, Baltimore City's share of annual case closings was less than its share of the total cash assistance caseload. Second, due to the moderate—even dramatic—caseload declines in Maryland's 23 counties, Baltimore City has accounted for an increasingly larger share of the state's total active cash assistance caseload. Both findings held in year five. The gap between closures and caseload in year five in the City was -2.0%, with the City accounting for 60.5% of the state caseload (up from 59.7% in year four, 57.7% in year three, 54.9% in year two, and 50.7% in year one). However, the year five

closures/caseload gap in Baltimore City (-2.0%) is substantially smaller than the gap observed in the first through fourth years of reform: -17.1%, -11.6%, -3.8%, and -5.5%, respectively.³

Attention should also continue to be focused on the use of full family sanctions, especially those imposed for non-compliance with work requirements. In year five, as was true in the first four years of reform, Maryland continued to make relatively sparing use of this new, more severe penalty compared to many other states. However, 19.3% of all year five closures statewide, or about one of every five closures, were due to full family sanctioning. This is much higher than in years two and three, when full family sanctioning represented about one in ten closures statewide. It also represents a slight increase from year four (18.5%). Overall, though, it appears that sanctioning continues to be used in moderation and is not the key driver behind caseload declines. Nonetheless, because it is such a severe penalty, sanctioning remains an area to which state and local program managers should continue to pay close attention. The emergence, in year five, of Prince George's County as the jurisdiction with the largest gap (-2.3%) between its share of the state's total cash assistance caseload (11.3%) and its share of total case closings (9.0%) is also noteworthy. This county is second only to Baltimore City in the size of its caseload; indeed, these two jurisdictions together account for approximately seven of every 10 (71.8%) active TCA cases in year five. Going forward, it would be prudent to pay close attention to the situations and trends in

³ The year 3 figure may be misleading because of certain short-lived Baltimore City case review practices which resulted in large numbers of closures during that period of time.

both jurisdictions. Due to their size, results achieved or not achieved in those jurisdictions will largely determine the state's overall results in future years.

Introduction

The University of Maryland's School of Social Work, through a long-standing partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR), is carrying out a multi-faceted, multi-year research program focused on the implementation, operation and outcomes of welfare reform in our state. The most well-known of these projects is the *Life After Welfare* study which tracks longitudinally the post-exit experiences of several thousand randomly-selected families who have left welfare since the beginning of reform (October 1996) and on which six statewide reports have been issued. The *Life After Welfare* study provides empirical case-level data that policy-makers and administrators can use to judge how the new welfare program is working, identify program modifications that may be needed, and assess what happens to Maryland families once they no longer receive cash assistance.

The Caseload Exits at the Local Level series of reports provide additional information about Maryland welfare leavers, specifically, macro-level data that are not covered in the *Life* study. By design, the *Life* reports present detailed follow-up employment, recidivism and other data about a statewide random sample of exiting cases. In contrast, *Caseload Exits* reports look at the entire universe of cases which exited cash assistance in Maryland during a given year. This report, the fifth in the series, examines the 31,088 cases which closed during the fifth year of reform (October 2000 - September 2001). It describes case characteristics, exit patterns and the use of full family sanctioning for each of the state's 24 jurisdictions and the state as a whole.

Methodology

Looking at all cases that closed during the fifth full year of welfare reform permits us to answer a number of questions germane to program monitoring and planning. The main questions of interest are:

- What are the general trends in case closings in the fifth year of reform?
- Do case closing patterns differ across jurisdictions?
- How does each jurisdiction's share of closings compare to its share of the overall average caseload for the same period of time?
- What is the general statewide profile of all fifth year exiters and the profile in each subdivision in terms of assistance unit size, number of adults, number of children and length of the most recent welfare spell?
- What are the demographic characteristics of exiting payees including: gender, race/ethnicity, age, age at first birth, and age of youngest child in the assistance unit?
- What are the most common administratively-recorded reasons for case closure?
- What proportion of cases, statewide and in each subdivision, left welfare during the fifth year because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work requirements or non-cooperation with child support?

To answer these questions, aggregate data on closing cases were obtained from monthly case closing extract files created from an administrative data system, the Client Automated Resources and Eligibility System (CARES). This system contains official records of clients' utilization of various public assistance and social service programs, including cash assistance, which are under the purview of the Department of Human Resources and local Departments of Social Services (LDSSes). There are 24 LDSSes in the state - one in each of Maryland's 23 counties and in the separate, incorporated City of Baltimore.

In addition to providing raw data on the number of closing cases throughout the state, the extract files created from the administrative data system also contain the following data which are presented in this report:

- Assistance unit size - number of individuals included on the grant;
- Case composition - numbers of children and adults included on the grant;
- Benefit begin and end dates - from which length of current welfare spell is calculated;
- Closing code - administratively-recorded reason for welfare case closure; and
- Demographic characteristics of exiting payees - age, racial/ethnic group, age of youngest child in assistance unit, and age of female payees at the birth of their first child.

A closing case (or case closure), for purposes of this analysis, is defined as an assistance unit which, at least once during the 12 month study period, ceased receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefits (formerly AFDC). That is, we count “cases” or families rather than “closures” per se. Because some cases could, conceivably, have exited or closed more than once during the 12 month period, the total number of closures reported here may differ from the total number of closures reported by DHR for that same period of time.

Findings

The following results are based on the universe of unique closing cases (n=31,088) in the fifth full year of welfare reform (October 2000 - September 2001) in Maryland. The universe includes all assistance units that exited cash assistance at least once during the 12 month period. Findings for the state and each of its 24 local jurisdictions are presented in the following sections:

- Closing cases by month: statewide analysis
- Closing cases by month: jurisdictional analysis
- Closing cases relative to caseload size: jurisdictional analysis
- Characteristics of exiting cases: statewide and jurisdictional analyses
- Characteristics of exiting payees: statewide and jurisdictional analyses
- Administrative reasons for case closure: statewide and jurisdictional analyses
- Full family sanctions: statewide and jurisdictional analyses.

Closing Cases by Month: Statewide Analysis

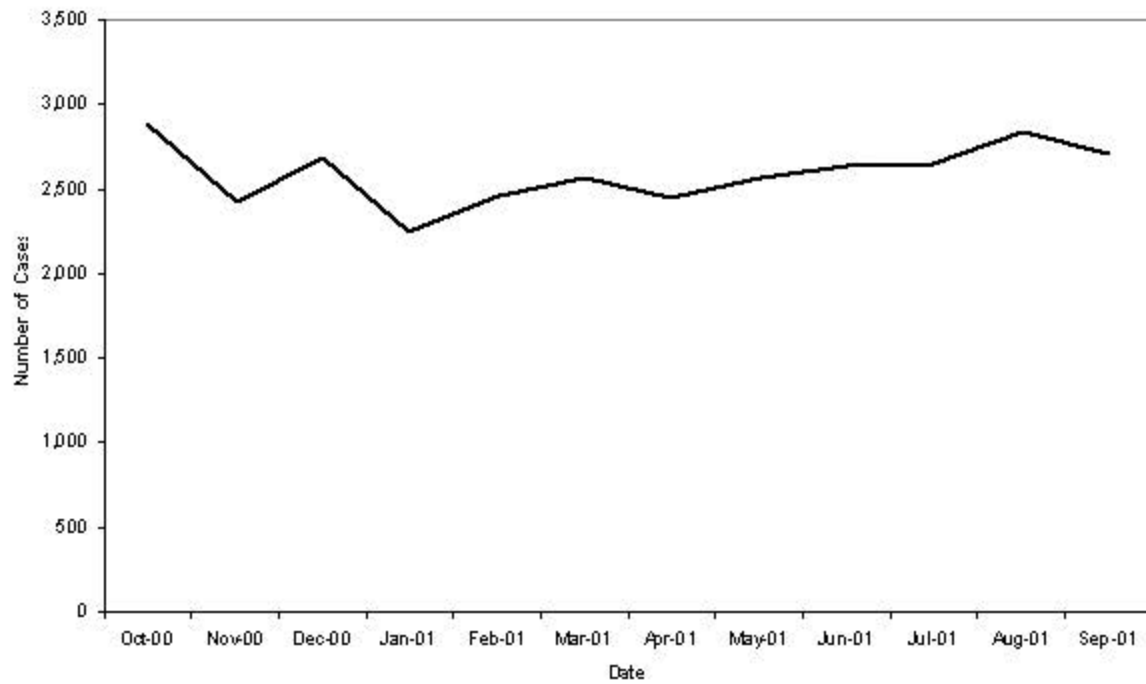
Aggregate statewide data on the number of cases closing during the entire year and in each of the 12 months are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1, following. As the table and figure show, the general trend in year five was that of more exits in the beginning and end of the year and fewer in the middle six months. Specifically, the greatest number of closings (n=8,185) occurred in the fourth quarter (July 2001 - September 2001), with only slightly fewer occurring (n=7,994) in the first quarter (October 2000 - December 2000). Smaller, although still sizeable, numbers of closings took place in the third and second quarters of the year (n=7,641 and n=7,268,

respectively). The spread between the month with the highest number and proportion of closings (October 2000, n=2,888 or 9.3%) and the month with the lowest number (January 2001, n=2,243 or 7.2%) was 645 cases.

Table 1. Number of Monthly Closing Cases: Maryland

Month	Closing Cases	Percent	Cumulative Percent
October 2000	2,888	9.3%	9.3%
November 2000	2,424	7.8%	17.1%
December 2000	2,682	8.6%	25.7%
<i>1st Quarter Total</i>	<i>7,994</i>	<i>25.7%</i>	<i>25.7%</i>
January 2001	2,243	7.2%	32.9%
February 2001	2,460	7.9%	40.8%
March 2001	2,565	8.3%	49.1%
<i>2nd Quarter Total</i>	<i>7,268</i>	<i>23.4%</i>	<i>49.1%</i>
April 2001	2,442	7.9%	56.9%
May 2001	2,570	8.3%	65.2%
June 2001	2,629	8.5%	73.7%
<i>3rd Quarter Total</i>	<i>7,641</i>	<i>24.6%</i>	<i>73.7%</i>
July 2001	2,652	8.5%	82.2%
August 2001	2,834	9.1%	91.3%
September 2001	2,699	8.7%	100%
<i>4th Quarter Total</i>	<i>8,185</i>	<i>26.3%</i>	<i>100%</i>
Annual Total	31,088	100%	100%

Figure 1. Closing Cases By Month: Maryland



Closing Cases by Month: Jurisdictional Analysis⁴

Maryland is a small but diverse state. Thus, state-level analyses often mask important intra-state differences. In addition, Maryland's commitment to local flexibility in welfare reform practice necessitates an examination of differences among jurisdictions. Monthly and quarterly closing numbers and proportions for each jurisdiction are presented in Table 2 on the following pages.

As expected, there is no one way to characterize the nature of case-closings across the state (Table 2). However, some broad patterns emerge. Eleven jurisdictions experienced the largest proportion of closings in the first quarter (October 2000 - December 2000). These counties are quite diverse in terms of location, population and TCA caseload size (Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's Counties). Five of 24 jurisdictions recorded their largest number and percent of closings during the second quarter (January 2001 - March 2001). These jurisdictions are also quite varied demographically and economically: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. In the third quarter (April 2001 - June 2001), four counties, again a varied group, experienced the greatest number of case closings: Dorchester, Garrett, Somerset, and Washington. Finally, four jurisdictions had the largest proportion of closings in the fourth quarter (July 2001 - September 2001). These were the counties of Caroline, Harford, Howard, and Baltimore City.

⁴Readers are referred to Appendix A, Figures A-1 to A-24, which graphically illustrate year five monthly case closing patterns separately for each local jurisdiction. For readers unfamiliar with Maryland, a state map is included as Appendix B.

Table 2. Number of Closing Cases by Month and Jurisdiction

	Maryland	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
October 2000	2,888 (9.3%)	23 (10.0%)	117 (7.2%)	386 (12.5%)	12 (6.75%)	14 (10.2%)	21 (9.7%)
November 2000	2,424 (7.8%)	24 (10.4%)	144 (8.9%)	284 (9.2%)	9 (5.1%)	13 (9.5%)	19 (8.8%)
December 2000	2,682 (8.6%)	22 (9.5%)	132 (8.2%)	265 (8.6%)	23 (12.9%)	7 (5.1%)	20 (9.3%)
1st Quarter	7,994 (25.7%)	69 (29.9%)	393 (24.3%)	935 (30.3%)	44 (24.7%)	34 (24.8%)	60 (27.8%)
January 2001	2,243 (7.2%)	21 (9.1%)	145 (9.0%)	240 (7.8%)	16 (9.0%)	5 (3.6%)	14 (6.5%)
February 2001	2,460 (7.9%)	16 (6.9%)	130 (8.1%)	264 (8.5%)	20 (11.2%)	12 (8.8%)	19 (8.8%)
March 2001	2,565 (8.3%)	14 (6.1%)	149 (9.2%)	245 (7.9%)	15 (8.4%)	6 (4.4%)	21 (9.7%)
2ND Quarter	7,268 (23.4%)	51 (22.1%)	424 (26.3%)	749 (24.2%)	51 (28.7%)	23 (16.8%)	54 (25.0%)
April 2001	2,442 (7.9%)	16 (6.9%)	123 (7.6%)	228 (7.4%)	13 (7.3%)	15 (10.9%)	22 (10.2%)
May 2001	2,570 (8.3%)	17 (7.4%)	149 (9.2%)	241 (7.8%)	18 (10.1%)	11 (8.0%)	12 (5.6%)
June 2001	2,629 (8.5%)	29 (12.6%)	115 (7.1%)	249 (8.1%)	12 (6.7%)	12 (8.8%)	17 (7.9%)
3rd Quarter	7,641 (24.6%)	62 (26.8%)	387 (24.0%)	718 (23.2%)	43 (24.2%)	38 (27.7%)	51 (23.6%)
July 2001	2,652 (8.5%)	17 (7.4%)	138 (8.6%)	211 (6.8%)	16 (9.0%)	15 (10.9%)	12 (5.6%)
August 2001	2,834 (9.1%)	16 (6.9%)	152 (9.4%)	223 (7.2%)	13 (7.3%)	20 (14.6%)	19 (8.8%)
September 2001	2,699 (9.1%)	16 (6.9%)	120 (7.4%)	253 (8.2%)	11 (6.2%)	7 (5.1%)	20 (9.3%)
4th Quarter	8,185 (26.3%)	49 (21.2%)	410 (25.4%)	687 (22.2%)	40 (22.5%)	42 (30.7%)	51 (23.6%)
Total	31,088	231	1,614	3,089	178	137	216

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford
October 2000	38 (9.8%)	38 (8.9%)	29 (9.0%)	42 (10.6%)	13 (10.8%)	39 (7.8%)
November 2000	26 (6.7%)	31 (7.3%)	17 (5.3%)	32 (8.1%)	13 (10.8%)	37 (7.4%)
December 2000	34 (8.8%)	51 (12.0%)	23 (7.2%)	38 (9.6%)	6 (5.05)	46 (9.1%)
1st Quarter	98 (25.3%)	120 (28.2%)	69 (21.5%)	112 (28.4%)	32 (26.7%)	122 (24.3%)
January 2001	29 (7.5%)	32 (7.5%)	27 (8.4%)	28 (7.1%)	8 (6.7%)	47 (9.3%)
February 2001	27 (7.0%)	44 (10.3%)	26 (8.1%)	35 (8.9%)	11 (9.2%)	33 (6.6%)
March 2001	41 (10.6%)	42 (9.9%)	26 (8.1%)	30 (7.6%)	10 (8.3%)	33 (6.6%)
2nd Quarter	97 (25.1%)	118 (27.7%)	79 (24.6%)	93 (23.5%)	29 (24.2%)	113 (22.5%)
April 2001	27 (7.0%)	32 (7.5%)	32 (10.0%)	30 (7.6%)	14 (11.7%)	40 (8.0%)
May 2001	32 (8.3%)	30 (7.0%)	25 (7.8%)	35 (8.9%)	9 (7.5%)	49 (9.7%)
June 2001	35 (9.0%)	38 (8.9%)	31 (9.7%)	33 (8.4%)	10 (8.3%)	44 (8.7%)
3rd Quarter	94 (24.3%)	100 (23.5%)	88 (27.4%)	98 (24.8%)	33 (27.5%)	133 (26.4%)
July 2001	31 (8.0%)	36 (8.5%)	35 (10.9%)	30 (7.6%)	8 (6.7%)	38 (7.6%)
August 2001	30 (7.8%)	25 (5.9%)	24 (7.5%)	36 (9.1%)	9 (7.5%)	45 (8.9%)
September 2001	37 (9.6%)	27 (6.3%)	26 (8.1%)	26 (6.6%)	9 (7.5%)	52 (10.3%)
4th Quarter	98 (25.3%)	88 (20.7%)	85 (26.5%)	92 (23.3%)	26 (21.7%)	135 (26.8%)
Total	387	426	321	395	120	503

Note: Quarterly percentages may not represent the exact sum of the percentages for the individual months, due to rounding.

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
October 2000	16 (9.5%)	4 (10.5%)	81 (8.5%)	271 (9.7%)	5 (6.0%)	20 (12.7%)
November 2000	13 (7.7%)	5 (13.5%)	100 (10.5%)	244 (8.8%)	13 (15.5%)	17 (10.8%)
December 2000	18 (10.7%)	2 (5.3%)	82 (8.6%)	362 (13.0%)	10 (11.9%)	20 (12.7%)
1st Quarter	47 (27.8%)	11 (28.9%)	263 (27.6%)	877 (31.5%)	28 (33.3%)	57 (36.1%)
January 2001	10 (5.9%)	4 (10.5%)	74 (7.8%)	259 (9.3%)	6 (7.1%)	11 (7.0%)
February 2001	8 (4.7%)	1 (2.6%)	84 (8.8%)	243 (8.7%)	3 (3.6%)	8 (5.1%)
March 2001	13 (7.7%)	1 (2.6%)	74 (7.8%)	189 (6.8%)	9 (10.7%)	5 (3.2%)
2nd Quarter	31 (18.3%)	6 (15.8%)	232 (24.3%)	691 (24.8%)	18 (21.4%)	24 (15.2%)
April 2001	20 (11.8%)	1 (2.6%)	75 (7.9%)	192 (6.9%)	7 (8.3%)	11 (7.0%)
May 2001	6 (3.6%)	4 (10.5%)	88 (9.2%)	185 (6.6%)	7 (8.3%)	11 (7.0%)
June 2001	17 (10.1%)	6 (15.8%)	81 (8.5%)	224 (8.0%)	4 (4.8%)	15 (9.5%)
3rd Quarter	43 (25.4%)	11 (28.9%)	244 (25.6%)	601 (21.6%)	18 (21.4%)	37 (23.4%)
July 2001	15 (8.9%)	2 (5.3%)	72 (7.5%)	194 (7.0%)	3 (3.6%)	9 (5.7%)
August 2001	14 (8.3%)	5 (13.2%)	63 (6.6%)	208 (7.5%)	10 (11.9%)	16 (10.1%)
September 2001	19 (11.2%)	3 (7.9%)	80 (8.4%)	217 (7.8%)	7 (8.3%)	15 (9.5%)
4th Quarter	48 (28.4%)	10 (26.3%)	215 (22.5%)	619 (22.2%)	20 (23.8%)	28 (25.7%)
Total	169	38	954	2788	84	158

Note: Quarterly percentages may not represent the exact sum of the percentages for the individual months, due to rounding.

	Somerset	Talbot	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City
October 2000	9 (8.3%)	11 (12.5%)	18 (6.0%)	42 (8.7%)	12 (10.7%)	1,627 (8.9%)
November 2000	9 (8.3%)	5 (5.7%)	28 (9.3%)	40 (8.3%)	8 (7.1%)	1,290 (7.1%)
December 2000	10 (9.2%)	6 (6.8%)	22 (7.3%)	33 (6.8%)	5 (4.5%)	1,445 (7.9%)
1st Quarter	28 (25.7%)	22 (25.0%)	68 (22.7%)	115 (23.8%)	25 (22.3%)	4,362 (24.0%)
January 2001	3 (2.8%)	6 (6.8%)	13 (4.3%)	44 (9.1%)	15 (13.4%)	1,186 (6.5%)
February 2001	13 (11.9%)	11 (12.5%)	37 (12.3%)	36 (7.5%)	12 (10.7%)	1,367 (7.5%)
March 2001	6 (5.5%)	11 (12.5%)	22 (7.3%)	48 (9.9%)	9 (8.0%)	1,546 (8.5%)
2nd Quarter	22 (20.2%)	28 (31.8%)	72 (24.0%)	128 (26.5%)	36 (32.1%)	4,099 (22.5%)
April 2001	5 (4.6%)	6 (6.8%)	19 (6.3%)	35 (7.2%)	9 (8.0%)	1,470 (8.1%)
May 2001	12 (11.0%)	8 (9.1%)	34 (11.3%)	39 (8.1%)	7 (6.3%)	1,541 (8.5%)
June 2001	14 (12.8%)	5 (5.7%)	31 (10.3%)	42 (8.7%)	17 (15.2%)	1,548 (8.5%)
3rd Quarter	31 (28.4%)	19 (21.6%)	84 (28.0%)	116 (24.0%)	33 (29.5%)	4,559 (25.1%)
July 2001	9 (8.3%)	6 (6.8%)	20 (6.7%)	45 (9.3%)	8 (7.1%)	1,682 (9.2%)
August 2001	11 (10.1%)	6 (6.8%)	26 (8.7%)	40 (8.3%)	3 (2.7%)	1,819 (10.0%)
September 2001	8 (7.3%)	7 (8.0%)	30 (10.0%)	39 (8.1%)	7 (6.3%)	1,663 (9.1%)
4th Quarter	28 (25.7%)	19 (21.6%)	76 (25.3%)	124 (25.7%)	18 (16.1%)	5,164 (28.4%)
Total	109	88	300	483	112	18,184

Note: Quarterly percentages may not represent the exact sum of the percentages for the individual months, due to rounding.

Closing Cases Relative to Caseload Size: Jurisdictional Analysis

Table 2 shows that, relatively speaking, each jurisdiction continued to record sizable numbers of case closings during the fifth year of reform. The number of case closings occurring (or possible) in any subdivision is, of course, largely a function of the size of its overall TCA caseload. Because caseload sizes vary dramatically across jurisdictions, meaningful cross-jurisdiction comparisons using actual numbers and proportions are difficult. However, one way to contrast localities which takes caseload size differences into account is to consider each subdivision's share of statewide case closings relative to its share of the statewide average annual caseload for the same period. This information appears in Table 3, following this discussion.⁵

Table 3 tells us several things. First, it is important to note that jurisdictions with the largest caseloads (Baltimore City and the counties of Prince George's, Baltimore, Montgomery and Anne Arundel) are also those with the largest proportions of total case closures. These five subdivisions account for 86.7% of the average annual caseload and a similar proportion of statewide case closures (85.7%) during the 12-month study period.

Second, the figures in the "difference" column of Table 3 point out that in all but five jurisdictions (Harford, Caroline, St. Mary's, and Prince George's Counties, and Baltimore City) the percentage of total case closings equaled or exceeded their share of the average annual total caseload. Of the five jurisdictions with lower proportions of case closings, Prince George's County and Baltimore City are noteworthy. In both

⁵ Caseload data were calculated by the authors from the *Monthly Statistical Reports* issued by the Family Investment Administration, Department of Human Resources for the period October 2000 - September 2001.

cases, their share of case closings was at least two percentage points less than their share of the state's annual caseload. The closure/caseload gaps were -2.3% and -2.0% for Prince George's County and Baltimore City, respectively. Specifically, Prince George's County accounted for 11.3% of the TCA caseload, but only 9.0% of TCA closures; in Baltimore City the comparable figures are 60.5% and 58.5%.

A few points specific to Baltimore City deserve mention. First, the City accounted for nearly six of every ten (58.5% or 18,184 of 31,088) cases that closed at least once during the 12-month period. Second, the City's share of overall case closings has grown each year since the beginning of reform, increasing from 33.6% in the first year to 58.5% by the fifth year.

However, over the same period, Baltimore City has accounted for an increasingly larger share of the state's overall TCA caseload. As shown in Table 3, Baltimore City accounted for 60.5% of the statewide caseload during the fifth year of reform, up from 59.7% during the fourth year of reform (October 1999 - September 2000). Similarly, the City represented 57.7%, 54.9%, and 50.7% of the total active caseload during the third (October 1998 - September 1999), second (October 1997 - September 1998), and first (October 1996 - September 1997) years of reform, respectively.⁶ The obvious and very important implication of this trend is that the state's long-term success in achieving the goals of reform is contingent on the implementation and results of reform efforts in Baltimore City.

⁶ See: Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group: (April, 1998) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The First Year of FIP*, (June, 1999) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Second Year of FIP*, (April 2000) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Third Year of FIP*, and (September, 2000) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Fourth Year of FIP*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Table 3. Percent of Total Closings/Caseload by Jurisdiction:10/00 - 9/01

Jurisdiction	Percent of Total Closings	Percent of Total Caseload	Difference
Baltimore County	9.9%	8.2%	1.7%
Anne Arundel	5.2%	3.6%	1.6%
Wicomico	1.6%	1.4%	0.2%
Cecil	1.2%	0.8%	0.4%
Carroll	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%
Dorchester	1.0%	0.8%	0.2%
Calvert	0.6%	0.5%	0.1%
Frederick	1.3%	1.1%	0.2%
Montgomery	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%
Howard	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Harford	1.6%	1.8%	-0.2%
Garrett	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%
Queen Anne's	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Allegany	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Washington	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Somerset	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
Caroline	0.4%	0.5%	-0.1%
Talbot	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
Worcester	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
St. Mary's	0.5%	0.6%	-0.1%
Kent	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Charles	1.4%	1.3%	0.1%
Prince George's	9.0%	11.3%	-2.3%
Baltimore City	58.5%	60.5%	-2.0%
Total	100%	100%	0%

Note: Caseload data were calculated for this table by the authors from the *Monthly Statistical Reports* issued by the Family Investment Administration, Department of Human Resources for the period October 2000 - September 2001.

Characteristics of Exiting Cases: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

Characteristics of the universe of year five exiting cases are presented for the state and each jurisdiction in Table 4, which follows this discussion. Five characteristics describing exiting cases are presented: length of the TCA spell which culminated in the exit;⁷ number of adults in the assistance unit; number of children in the assistance unit; proportion of child-only cases;⁸ and size of the assistance unit.

Length of Exiting Spell

Table 4 shows that, statewide, the vast majority of exiting cases during the fifth year of reform were on cash assistance for a relatively short period of time. Fully 74.3% of the cases had been open for 12 months or less. Another 15.1% were open between one and two years. Thus, nearly nine of every 10 exiters during the fifth year had been on welfare continuously for under two years. Conversely, just three percent (3.3%) had received assistance for more than five uninterrupted years.⁹ Statewide, the typical case had been open for less than one year (median = 8.4 months) at the time of exit.

Jurisdictional results are similar, but variations are evident. In all 24 jurisdictions the most common situation among exiting cases was a current welfare spell that had lasted for one year or less. However, there were large variations in the relative size of this group of short-spell exiters. For example, in Calvert County, 88.2% of exiting cases

⁷ Length of exiting spell refers, in this paper, to the continuous period of TCA receipt immediately preceding the closing of the case. Readers should be aware that variations in local case closing and/or redetermination practices during the study period may influence the observed results.

⁸ A child-only case is one in which no adult is included in the assistance unit (i.e., cash assistance is being provided only to the child or children).

⁹ Because of the disproportionate size of Baltimore City in terms of actual numbers of exiting cases, the table presents statewide data in two forms: with the City included and with the City excluded. References to statewide figures in the text include Baltimore City.

had been on welfare for one year or less, while in Harford, Howard, and St. Mary's Counties, 71.8%, 71.0%, and 56.3% of cases, respectively, had spells of 12 or fewer months. The median spell (just prior to the exit) in these four counties was 3.9, 7.3, 7.7, and 10.7 months, respectively.

At the other end of the spectrum, relatively few exiting cases statewide or in any jurisdiction had been on welfare continuously for more than five years. Not a single jurisdiction had even 10% of its exiting cases receiving TCA continuously for this long.¹⁰ Five of the 24 counties had approximately two percent or less of their exiting cases on TCA for over five years: Calvert (0.6%), Cecil (2.1%), Charles (2.1%), Garrett (0.8%), and St. Mary's (1.9%). Only two counties—Kent and Worcester—had as much as eight percent of their exiting cases on cash assistance for five years or more (7.9%, and 8.0%, respectively). In these two counties, the typical welfare spell which culminated in the exit which brought cases into our sample lasted 5.6 and 4.4 months, respectively. The remaining seventeen jurisdictions fell somewhere in between this range. ____

Number of Adults in the Assistance Unit

The most common situation among year five closing cases was that of an assistance unit containing only one adult. Statewide, about four-fifths (78.2%) of all cases contained only one adult recipient. Conversely, two-adult cases were the exception (2.3%), and child-only cases (no adult recipients) accounted for one of every five (19.5%) exiting cases during the fifth year of reform.

¹⁰ The five year time limit on benefit receipt did not affect any cash assistance cases in Maryland until January 2002. The last month covered in this study is October 2001.

The same pattern emerges at the local level. In all 24 jurisdictions, assistance units with one adult were most common among year five closing cases. The percentages ranged from a low of approximately three-fifths of cases in Allegany (63.2%), Howard (63.3%), and Kent (63.2%) Counties to a high of 82.6% in Calvert County and 82.3% in Baltimore City. Although two adult assistance units were a very small percentage of all exiting cases statewide (2.3%), they were a much larger proportion of exiting cases in a few, predominantly rural, jurisdictions. In Garrett County, one of every five closing cases (20.8%) contained two adults. Relative to the state as a whole, two counties—Allegany and Cecil—also had notably higher proportions (8.2% and 6.7%, respectively) of exiting cases containing two adults.

Number of Children in the Assistance Unit

Statewide, cases closing between October 2000 and September 2001 consisted primarily of only one (45.8%) or two (28.4%) children in the assistance unit. Just under one in four cases (22.5%) contained three or more children.

In all 24 jurisdictions, the largest proportion of cases had one child in the assistance unit though, again, there were noticeable variations across counties. The percentages of one-child families ranged from a low of 39.8% of cases in Wicomico County to a high of 59.5% in Queen Anne's and 59.8% in Worcester Counties. The proportion of exiting cases with three or more children ranged from one in ten in Worcester County to one in five in Harford County.

Child-Only Cases

Child-only cases, those in which no adult is included in the assistance unit/benefit amount, have historically represented about 10 -15% of the overall cash

assistance caseload in Maryland and nationally. However, as large numbers of traditional mother-child families have left welfare due to aggressive reforms, child-only cases have come to represent a considerably larger proportion of cash assistance caseloads. Nationally, by 1999, child-only cases represented 29.1% of the total caseload.¹¹ In September 2001, child-only cases represented more than one third (35.5%) of all active TCA cases in Maryland, and in 19 counties, more than two-fifths of the entire active caseload.¹² We therefore pay special attention to this special sub-set of the TCA caseload in all welfare reform-related research projects.

Statewide during the fifth year of reform, child-only cases exited welfare at a rate generally consistent with, though slightly higher than, their historical representation in the AFDC/TCA caseload. Overall, one-fifth of closing cases in the October 2000 to September 2001 period were child-only cases (19.5%).

There was a great deal of variation in this proportion across the 24 local jurisdictions. The lowest proportion was in Calvert County (12.9%), and the highest proportion of exiting child-only cases was in Kent County (36.8%), with Howard and Worcester reporting slightly lower proportions (33.1% and 33.0%, respectively).

Assistance Unit Size

Statewide, closing cases in year five ranged in size from one to 16 persons. The most common situation, which accounted for almost two of every five cases (37.7%), was that of a two person assistance unit. Three-person assistance units were

¹¹Dr. Donald Oellerich, US Department of Health and Human Services, personal communication, May 21, 2001

¹² Family Investment Administration, Core Caseload Report, September 2001, Baltimore: Department of Human Resources, November 2, 2001

considerably less common, accounting for one-fourth of all exiting cases, while those containing four or more individuals comprised 21.7% of exiting cases.

In every jurisdiction, two-person assistance units were also most common, though significant variation was observed. The range of two-person exiting cases was from 30.4% in St. Mary's County to 48.8% in Queen Anne's County.

Table 4. Case Characteristics By Jurisdiction - Third Year of FIP (October 2000 - September 2001)

	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore County	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	231	1614	3,089	178	137	216
Length of Ending Spell¹³						
12 months or less	78.4%	82.9%	79.0%	88.2%	78.1%	80.1%
13-24 months	11.3%	8.8%	12.7%	6.7%	10.9%	10.6%
25-36 months	2.6%	2.9%	3.6%	2.2%	3.6%	2.8%
37-48 months	1.7%	1.2%	1.4%	0.0%	1.5%	2.8%
49-60 months	0.9%	1.4%	0.9%	2.2%	0.0%	1.4%
more than 60 months	5.2%	2.8%	2.4%	0.6%	5.8%	2.3%
Mean spell length (months)	13.12	10.25	10.53	7.29	12.09	10.66
Median spell length (months)	4.67	4.27	5.49	3.85	4.93	5.32
Range (months)	1 - 187	1 - 397	1 - 189	1 - 64	1 - 141	1 - 151
Number of Adults						
0	28.6%	26.0%	22.4%	12.9%	27.0%	15.7%
1	63.2%	71.3%	75.4%	82.6%	67.2%	80.6%
2	8.2%	2.7%	2.1%	4.5%	5.8%	3.7%
Number of Children						
0	1.3%	5.1%	2.5%	2.8%	2.9%	2.8%
1	49.8%	48.2%	48.0%	47.2%	51.8%	54.6%
2	30.3%	24.6%	30.0%	30.3%	29.9%	24.1%
3 or more	18.6%	22.1%	19.5%	19.7%	15.4%	18.6%
Child-Only Cases	28.6%	26.0%	22.4%	12.9%	27.0%	15.7%
Size of Assistance Unit						
1	19.9%	21.4%	17.3%	12.4%	21.9%	13.9%
2	35.9%	37.5%	37.8%	38.2%	38.0%	46.3%
3	24.7%	20.5%	26.1%	29.2%	24.8%	20.8%
4 or more	19.4%	20.6%	18.8%	20.2%	15.3%	19.0%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.54	2.54	2.57	2.63	2.43	2.51
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 7	1 - 10	1 - 10	1 - 6	1 - 6	1 - 6

¹³Readers are cautioned that some jurisdictional differences in length of exiting spell may be explained by differences in case closing practices.

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford	Howard
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	387	426	321	395	120	503	169
Length of Ending Spell							
12 months or less	82.9%	73.9%	75.7%	80.3%	83.3%	71.8%	71.0%
13-24 months	11.1%	18.1%	11.2%	11.9%	8.3%	15.9%	14.8%
25-36 months	2.6%	4.2%	4.0%	2.5%	5.0%	4.4%	4.1%
37-48 months	1.0%	0.7%	2.8%	0.8%	0.0%	2.2%	1.8%
49-60 months	0.3%	0.9%	2.5%	1.3%	2.5%	1.4%	3.6%
more than 60 months	2.1%	2.1%	3.7%	3.3%	0.8%	4.4%	4.7%
Mean spell length (months)	8.54	11.13	12.66	11.15	9.15	13.82	15.00
Median spell length (months)	3.98	6.26	5.75	5.49	4.16	7.30	7.66
Range (months)	1 - 128	1 - 173	1 - 96	1 - 157	1 - 130	1 - 191	1 - 131
Number of Adults							
0	16.3%	21.8%	21.8%	24.1%	13.3%	21.3%	33.1%
1	77.0%	73.5%	76.0%	70.6%	65.8%	75.3%	63.3%
2	6.7%	4.7%	2.2%	5.3%	20.8%	3.4%	3.6%
Number of Children							
0	5.7%	3.8%	4.7%	4.1%	3.3%	2.6%	0.6%
1	40.8%	43.9%	47.7%	48.1%	45.0%	42.9%	47.9%
2	29.5%	30.8%	29.0%	29.4%	29.2%	29.6%	30.2%
3 or more	24.0%	21.6%	18.7%	18.5%	22.4%	24.9%	21.4%
Child-Only Cases	16.3%	21.8%	21.8%	24.1%	13.3%	21.3%	33.1%
Size of Assistance Unit							
1	14.7%	18.8%	17.8%	18%	10.0%	17.1%	17.8%
2	34.4%	31.7%	39.9%	38%	38.3%	32.2%	40.2%
3	26.1%	28.2%	23.7%	28%	24.2%	26.2%	24.3%
4 or more	24.8%	21.4%	18.6%	17%	27.4%	24.5%	17.8%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.75	2.69	2.52	2.54	2.83	2.69	2.57
Median Assistance Unit Size	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Range	1 - 8	1 - 10	1 - 8	1 - 8	1 - 7	1 - 8	1 - 7

	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's	Somerset	Talbot
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	38	954	2,788	84	158	109	88
Length of Ending Spell							
12 months or less	73.7%	77.4%	64.2%	85.7%	56.3%	80.7%	76.1%
13-24 months	10.5%	10.6%	23.1%	6.0%	29.1%	11.0%	13.6%
25-36 months	5.3%	3.6%	4.7%	1.2%	9.5%	3.7%	2.3%
37-48 months	0.0%	3.6%	2.7%	4.8%	2.5%	0.9%	2.3%
49-60 months	2.6%	1.6%	1.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	1.1%
more than 60 months	7.9%	3.4%	4.2%	2.4%	1.9%	3.7%	4.5%
Mean spell length (months)	14.09	12.51	15.61	8.89	14.53	10.26	11.63
Median spell length (months)	5.64	5.31	10.19	3.71	10.66	6.38	5.27
Range (months)	1 - 89	1 - 188	1 - 196	1 - 79	1 - 107	1 - 93	1 - 124
Number of Adults							
0	36.8%	25.1%	28.0%	27.4%	26.6%	22.0%	28.4%
1	63.2%	69.1%	69.7%	66.7%	67.1%	73.4%	69.3%
2	0.0%	5.1%	2.2%	6.0%	6.3%	4.6%	2.3%
Number of Children							
0	5.3%	2.5%	3.9%	4.8%	2.5%	4.6%	5.7%
1	55.3%	44.3%	46.0%	59.5%	44.3%	47.7%	52.3%
2	28.9%	29.6%	26.6%	22.6%	31.6%	30.3%	19.3%
3 or more	10.5%	23.5%	23.4%	13.2%	21.5%	17.4%	22.7%
Child-Only Cases	36.8%	25.1%	28.0%	27.4%	26.6%	22.0%	28.4%
Size of Assistance Unit							
1	26.3%	17.2%	21.8%	20.2%	21.5%	20.2%	25.0%
2	44.7%	35.5%	34.4%	48.8%	30.4%	35.8%	37.5%
3	23.7%	24.3%	21.8%	21.4%	23.4%	25.7%	19.3%
4 or more	5.2%	22.9%	21.9%	9.6%	24.7%	18.4%	18.2%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.11	2.70	2.59	2.35	2.65	2.56	2.41
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 5	1 - 11	1 - 13	1 - 6	1 - 13	1 - 7	1 - 6

	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City	Maryland with Balt City	Maryland without Balt City
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	300	483	112	18,184	31,088	12,904
Length of Ending Spell						
12 months or less	85.3%	73.9%	79.5%	73.4%	74.3%	75.6%
13-24 months	6.7%	14.5%	8.0%	15.6%	15.1%	14.3%
25-36 months	1.0%	3.5%	3.6%	5.3%	4.6%	3.7%
37-48 months	1.7%	1.4%	1%	1.5%	1.7%	1.9%
49-60 months	2.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%
more than 60 months	3.3%	4.3%	8.0%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
Mean spell length (months)	11.23	13.39	15.79	14.41	13.49	12.19
Median spell length (months)	5.46	5.36	4.40	9.76	8.38	6.24
Range (months)	1 - 181	1 - 181	1 - 194	1 - 501	1 - 501	1 - 397
Number of Adults						
0	26.7%	22.8%	33.0%	15.9%	19.5%	24.4%
1	72.3%	76.2%	65.2%	82.3%	78.2%	72.3%
2	1.0%	1.0%	1.8%	1.7%	2.3%	3.2%
Number of Children						
0	2.3%	6.6%	1.8%	3.1%	3.3%	3.5%
1	53.3%	39.8%	59.8%	45.0%	45.8%	46.9%
2	26.7%	29.8%	28.6%	28.5%	28.4%	28.2%
3 or more	17.6%	23.7%	9.9%	23.3%	22.5%	21.5%
Child-Only Cases	26.7%	22.8%	33.0%	15.9%	19.5%	24.4%
Size of Assistance Unit						
1	20.3%	18.4%	23.2%	12.9%	15.4%	19.0%
2	41.3%	34.0%	47.3%	38.4%	37.7%	36.5%
3	22.0%	26.3%	20.5%	26.2%	25.3%	24.0%
4 or more	16.4%	21.3%	9.0%	22.3%	21.7%	20.4%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.50	2.63	2.20	2.73	2.67	2.59
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 10	1 - 8	1 - 5	1 - 16	1 - 16	1 - 13

Characteristics of Exiting Payees: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

For purposes of describing the universe of cases that left cash assistance in the fifth year of reform, we are also able to profile exiting payees on certain demographic characteristics. Specifically, these data permit us to describe payees' gender, racial/ethnic group, age, age at first birth and age of the youngest child in the payee's assistance unit. These data for the state and each subdivision are presented in Table 5, following this discussion.¹⁴

Gender of Payee

The vast majority of cases leaving welfare in the fifth year were headed by women. Statewide the payee was female in more than nine out of ten exiting cases (95.8%). Male payees were a very small minority; fewer than one in twenty cases was headed by a man (4.2%). In all 24 jurisdictions, cases headed by female payees also predominated, accounting for more than nine of ten exiting cases in year five. ____

Age of Payee

Statewide, the typical exiting payee in year five was in her early thirties (mean 33.9 years, median 32 years). Payees' ages ranged considerably, from 18 to 89 years of age. Slight jurisdictional variation was found in the mean age of exiting payees. Average ages range from 31 years in Garrett County to 38 years in Howard County. In year five, 22.2% of exiting payees were over the age of 40.

¹⁴ Because of the disproportionate size of Baltimore City in terms of actual numbers of exiting cases, the table presents statewide data in two forms: with the City included and with the City excluded. References to statewide figures in the text **include** Baltimore City.

Age at First Birth¹⁵

Statewide, the average payee in an exiting case was 22-years old at first birth. Fully 57.2% of exiting payees gave birth to their first child before the age of 21, while 25.8%, or about one in four, had their first child before the age of 18.

The jurisdictional analysis shows little variation in estimated age at first birth: from 21.2 years in Dorchester County to 24.1 years in Howard County. Conversely, there was great jurisdictional variation in the proportion of exiting caseheads who had their first child at a relatively young age. The share of exiting mothers who had their first child prior to age 18 ranged from a minimum of 8.9% in Howard County to a maximum of 30.1% in Baltimore City. In all jurisdictions, over two in five exiting caseheads had their first child before age 21: the proportion of first births before age 21 was lowest in Montgomery County (42.8%) and highest in Worcester County (62.3%).

Age of Youngest Child

The average age of the youngest child in year five exiting families was just under six years (5.9). Children in exiting cases ranged from under one year of age to 18 years of age. The median, or midpoint, age was 4.5 years. Two of five (39.4%) exiting cases included a child under age three.

Across jurisdictions, the average age of the youngest child ranged from 4.4 years (Washington County) to 6.7 years (Howard County). The proportion of cases including at least one child under age three varied greatly across the state, from 30.5% in Howard County to twice that in Washington County (60.1%).

¹⁵ Estimates of age at first birth for female payees were calculated using the payee's date of birth and the date of birth of her oldest child included in the assistance unit. Our calculations underestimate the prevalence of early child-bearing if payees have another older child who is not in the assistance unit.

Table 5. Household Characteristics By Jurisdiction - Fifth Year of FIP (October 2000 - September 2001)

	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore County	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	231	1,614	3,089	178	137	216
% Caucasian	89.1	42.9	35.8	50.9	51.1	85.3
% African American	10.9	54.9	62.5	46.2	46.7	11.4
% Female	93.5	95.7	94.7	94.4	97.1	94.0
% Male	6.5	4.3	5.3	5.6	2.9	6.0
Age of Payee						
Mean	35.36	35.20	33.39	33.31	32.47	33.82
Median	34.16	33.28	31.18	32.64	29.19	32.86
Std. Dev.	12.18	11.90	11.24	10.42	12.55	11.60
Range (years)	18 - 65	18 - 83	18 - 83	18 - 69	18 - 74	18 - 76
% over age 40	25.1	26.7	20.7	21.9	19.7	22.2
Estimated Age at First Birth						
Mean	22.80	23.06	21.90	23.21	21.64	23.48
Median	20.78	21.23	20.42	21.25	19.91	21.67
Std. Dev.	6.11	5.84	5.25	6.06	5.35	5.66
Range (years)	15 - 46	13 - 44	13 - 48	13 - 43	13 - 37	16 - 49
% who gave birth before 18	18.2	17.9	22.0	10.9	25.7	10.5
% who gave birth before 21	51.8	48.3	55.0	48.3	55.6	44.2
Age of youngest child						
Mean	5.74	6.04	5.47	5.73	5.42	5.48
Median	3.38	4.48	3.71	4.21	3.58	3.77
Std. Dev.	5.31	5.20	4.88	4.83	5.16	4.98
Range	< 1yr - 18	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17
% cases with a child under 3	46.3	43.1	44.9	41.1	47.7	44.8

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford	Howard
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	387	426	321	395	120	503	169
% Caucasian	80.4	37.4	19.4	58.7	99.2	45.7	26.5
% African American	18.3	60.4	79.3	38.0	0.0	50.5	67.5
% Female	96.9	95.8	97.5	96.7	90.0	92.8	97.6
% Male	3.1	4.2	2.5	3.3	10.0	7.2	2.4
Age of Payee							
Mean	32.15	33.04	32.60	34.27	31.44	33.54	38.35
Median	31.54	31.59	29.89	32.76	29.61	32.04	37.21
Std. Dev.	9.45	10.60	11.29	11.23	10.71	10.46	11.90
Range (years)	18 - 64	18 - 70	18 - 76	18 - 82	18 - 72	18 - 79	18 - 78
% over age 40	16.8	16.2	18.7	22.5	16.7	21.3	34.3
Estimated Age First Birth							
Mean	21.98	22.15	21.19	23.59	21.83	22.18	24.13
Median	20.48	20.62	19.88	21.45	20.65	20.48	22.68
Std. Dev.	5.06	5.01	4.77	6.61	4.54	5.55	6.00
Range (years)	14 - 44	14 - 41	13 - 38	13 - 49	14 - 40	13 - 48	14 - 42
% who gave birth before 18	18.4	13.9	27.2	16.2	15.2	18.7	8.9
% who gave birth before 21	55.6	54.3	60.4	46.3	56.6	52.5	43.9
Age of youngest child							
Mean	5.81	5.40	6.16	5.45	4.98	5.51	6.69
Median	4.53	3.52	4.62	4.00	2.65	3.63	5.42
Std. Dev.	4.85	4.98	4.96	4.81	5.11	4.97	5.15
Range	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17
% cases with a child under 3	40.6	46.3	35.2	43.0	53.0	43.4	30.5

	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's	Somerset	Talbot
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	38	954	2,788	84	158	109	88
% Caucasian	34.2	15.3	4.4	56.6	40.5	24.8	30.7
% African American	65.8	69.4	93.4	43.4	59.5	74.3	68.2
% Female	92.1	95.0	95.1	95.2	94.9	92.7	92.0
% Male	7.9	5.0	4.9	4.8	5.1	7.3	8.0
Age of Payee							
Mean	37.28	35.21	35.79	34.25	35.61	34.07	34.92
Median	36.51	33.42	33.67	33.78	33.80	32.84	32.13
Std. Dev.	13.85	11.26	12.22	12.43	11.49	11.98	18.83
Range (years)	18 - 75	18 - 77	18 - 82	18 - 65	18 - 69	18 - 65	18 - 78
% over age 40	34.2	25.6	27.8	26.2	24.1	28.4	22.7
Estimated Age at First Birth							
Mean	22.80	23.70	22.46	23.22	22.21	22.71	23.53
Median	20.97	22.18	20.49	21.10	21.22	21.15	21.04
Std. Dev.	5.26	5.97	5.94	6.20	4.79	5.40	6.25
Range (years)	14 - 34	14 - 47	13 - 48	15 - 40	14 - 38	15 - 42	15 - 41
% who gave birth before 18	12.5	15.5	21.8	16.7	18.9	10.8	15.6
% who gave birth before 21	50.0	42.8	53.7	50.0	49.2	49.4	50.0
Age of youngest child							
Mean	6.53	5.64	6.45	5.27	6.48	5.77	5.80
Median	6.89	3.71	5.47	2.92	6.00	2.27	4.03
Std. Dev.	4.95	4.97	4.82	5.10	5.18	5.82	5.46
Range	< 1yr - 14	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17
% cases with a child under 3	31.4	44.8	32.5	52.6	38.8	55.7	43.5

	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City	Maryland with Balt City	Maryland without Balt City
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	300	483	112	18,184	31,088	12,904
% Caucasian	75.1	25.7	41.3	7.4	18.4	33.8
% African American	22.2	73.1	58.7	92.1	80.0	63.2
% Female	96.0	96.7	95.5	96.2	95.8	95.1
% Male	4.0	3.3	4.5	3.8	4.2	4.9
Age of Payee						
Mean	32.67	32.87	34.64	33.50	33.85	34.35
Median	29.54	29.90	30.86	31.56	31.96	32.43
Std. Dev.	11.77	11.94	12.67	11.30	11.44	11.63
Range (years)	18 - 69	18 - 89	18 - 62	18 - 84	18 - 89	18 - 89
% over age 40	21.3	20.5	28.6	21.2	22.2	23.6
Estimated Age at First Birth						
Mean	22.45	21.62	21.36	21.50	21.88	22.47
Median	20.92	20.38	19.67	19.74	20.15	20.74
Std. Dev.	5.25	5.44	5.43	5.63	5.66	5.65
Range (years)	13 - 40	13 - 44	14 - 38	13 - 49	13 - 49	13 - 49
% who gave birth before 18	14.4	22.8	20.8	30.1	25.8	19.4
% who gave birth before 21	51.7	58.3	62.3	60.6	57.2	52.2
Age of youngest child						
Mean	4.37	4.8	5.88	6.03	5.93	5.78
Median	1.16	2.77	3.93	4.63	4.45	4.15
Std. Dev.	5.12	4.71	5.52	4.83	4.89	4.98
Range	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 18	< 1yr - 17	< 1yr - 18	< 1yr - 18
% cases with a child under 3	60.1	51.9	46.2	37.5	39.4	42.1

Administrative Reasons for Case Closure: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

As we take care to note in all of our research reports focusing on welfare leavers, the reasons why families exit welfare are varied. Administrative data systems must attempt to capture this complexity and diversity in pre-determined, standardized codes. Our reports have documented that case closing codes do not always paint a full picture of why cash assistance cases close. Most notably, we have found that far more clients leave welfare for work than are known to the welfare agency as doing so. This situation often results when clients fail to keep a redetermination appointment or provide requested information, but do not inform the agency that they have secured a job.¹⁶ The caveats about administrative case closing reasons notwithstanding, it is still instructive to examine statewide and local case closure patterns for the fifth year of welfare reform. These data are particularly useful in illustrating the extent to which full-family sanctioning was used during reform's fifth year.

Top Five Case Closing Reasons: Statewide Data¹⁷

Table 6, following this discussion, presents the top five administrative reasons for year five cash assistance case closings for the universe of exiting cases statewide and each of the state's 24 local jurisdictions. Statewide, two reasons for closure prevail: "no recertification/no redetermination" (n=8,372 or 26.9%) and "income above limit (including started work)" (n=6,236 or 20.1%). These two reasons have been the most commonly used closing codes in all five years of welfare reform in Maryland. In each year, these two reasons together have accounted for between 47% and 58% of all case closures.

¹⁶ See, for example, University of Maryland School of Social Work, *Life After Welfare: Third Interim Report*, March 1999 for a more detailed discussion of this topic.

¹⁷Case closing reasons are available for 31,088/31,088 cases (100%).

Significantly, the third most common reason for case closure during the fifth year was “work sanction” (n=5,244 or 16.9%). Together, the “top three” reasons account for nearly two-thirds of all case closings during the 12-month period (n=19,852 or 63.9%). Statewide, the fourth most common reason for case closure between October 2000 and September 2001 was “eligibility/verification information not provided” (n=5,100 or 16.4%). Finally, the fifth most common closing reason was “not eligible” (n=1,724 or 5.5%). Altogether, these top five reasons accounted for more than four-fifths (n=26,676 or 85.8%) of all case closings during the 12-month period.

Top Five Case Closing Reasons: Jurisdictional Data

Jurisdiction-specific patterns in the use of various administrative case closing reasons were generally similar to the statewide pattern. Notably, in 18 of the state’s 24 jurisdictions, the most common reason for case closure was “income above limit (including started work)”. In year five, the percentage of cases closed for this reason ranged from 23.1% in Howard County to 55.3% in Kent County.

Five of the six jurisdictions (Allegany, Anne Arundel, Charles, Prince George’s, and Wicomico Counties and Baltimore City) that did not have “income above limit” as the top closing reason, all had “no recertification/no redetermination” as their number one reason for case closure. The share of cases closed with this code were: Charles County 32.2%; Prince George’s County 35.2%; Anne Arundel County 41.1%; Wicomico County 31.3%; and Baltimore City 28.6%. In the remaining jurisdiction, Allegany County, “worker avoided application” was the most common closing reason, recorded in 29.9% of all closings.

Table 6. Top Reasons for Case Closure¹⁸

Jurisdiction	Top 5 Closing Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Maryland	no recertification/no redetermination	8,372	26.9%
	income above limit (including started work)	6,236	20.1%
	work sanction	5,244	16.9%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	5,100	16.4%
	not eligible	1,724	5.5%
Allegany	worker voided application	69	29.9%
	income above limit (including started work)	59	25.5%
	work sanction	34	14.7%
	not eligible	16	6.9%
	requested closure	15	6.5%
Anne Arundel	no recertification/no redetermination	664	41.1%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	449	27.8%
	work sanction	169	10.5%
	income above limit (including started work)	141	8.7%
	not eligible	62	3.8%
Baltimore County	income above limit (including started work)	757	24.5%
	work sanction	698	22.6%
	no recertification/no redetermination	682	22.1%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	370	12.0%
	not eligible	180	5.8%
Calvert	income above limit (including started work)	62	34.8%
	work sanction	48	27.0%
	no recertification/no redetermination	21	11.8%
	eligibility/verification information - no provided	16	9.0%
	not eligible	9	5.1%
Caroline	income above limit (including started work)	59	43.1%
	no recertification/no redetermination	18	13.1%
	not eligible	15	10.9%
	work sanction	12	8.8%
	requested closure	9	6.6%
Carroll	income above limit (including started work)	84	38.9%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	35	16.2%
	work sanction	29	13.4%
	requested closure	21	9.7%
	not eligible	17	7.9%
Cecil	income above limit (including started work)	118	30.5%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	78	20.2%
	work sanction	67	17.3%
	not eligible	34	8.8%
	no recertification/no redetermination	28	7.2%

¹⁸ Some jurisdictions have more than 5 closing reasons listed if the fifth most common closing reason had two or more reasons for closure with an equal number of associated cases.

Jurisdiction	Top 5 Closing Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Charles	no recertification/no redetermination	137	32.2%
	income above limit (including started work)	91	21.4%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	62	14.6%
	work sanction	38	8.9%
	requested closure	31	7.3%
Dorchester	income above limit (including started work)	83	25.9%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	65	20.2%
	no recertification/no redetermination	55	17.1%
	work sanction	40	12.5%
	requested closure	32	10.0%
Frederick	income above limit (including started work)	155	39.2%
	not eligible	58	14.7%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	42	10.6%
	requested closure	37	9.4%
	no recertification/no redetermination	37	9.4%
Garrett	income above limit (including started work)	51	42.5%
	work sanction	19	15.8%
	requested closure	14	11.7%
	not eligible	12	10.0%
	child support sanction	7	5.8%
Harford	income above limit (including started work)	180	35.8%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	89	17.7%
	no recertification/no redetermination	76	15.1%
	not eligible	51	10.1%
	requested closure	43	8.5%
Howard	income above limit (including started work)	39	23.1%
	no recertification/no redetermination	34	20.1%
	work sanction	33	19.5%
	requested closure	20	11.8%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	18	10.7%
Kent	income above limit (including started work)	21	55.3%
	not eligible	7	18.4%
	requested closure	3	7.9%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	2	5.3%
	work sanction	1	2.6%
	child support sanction	1	2.6%
	no recertification/no redetermination	1	2.6%
	residency	1	2.6%
	intentional violation	1	2.6%
Montgomery	income above limit (including started work)	287	30.1%
	no recertification/no redetermination	175	18.3%
	work sanction	158	16.6%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	131	13.7%
	not eligible	65	6.8%
Prince George's	no recertification/no redetermination	982	35.2%
	income above limit (including started work)	532	19.1%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	447	16.0%
	requested closure	212	7.6%
	work sanction	162	5.8%

Jurisdiction	Top 5 Closing Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Queen Anne's	income above limit (including started work)	32	38.1%
	work sanction	13	15.5%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	12	14.3%
	not eligible	8	9.5%
	requested closure	7	8.3%
St. Mary's	income above limit (including started work)	57	36.1%
	no recertification/no redetermination	35	22.2%
	not eligible	22	13.9%
	requested closure	17	10.8%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	9	5.7%
Somerset	income above limit (including started work)	35	32.1%
	work sanction	23	21.1%
	not eligible	16	14.7%
	requested closure	15	13.8%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	8	7.3%
Talbot	income above limit (including started work)	32	36.4%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	14	15.9%
	requested closure	11	12.5%
	child support sanction	9	10.2%
	no recertification/no redetermination	8	9.1%
Washington	income above limit (including started work)	91	30.3%
	requested closure	46	15.3%
	work sanction	44	14.7%
	no recertification/no redetermination	31	10.3%
	not eligible	28	9.3%
Wicomico	no recertification/no redetermination	151	31.3%
	income above limit (including started work)	143	29.6%
	eligibility/verification information -not provided	53	11.0%
	requested closure	34	7.0%
	not eligible	31	6.4%
Worcester	income above limit (including started work)	27	24.1%
	requested closure	24	21.4%
	work sanction	20	17.9%
	not eligible	14	12.5%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	13	11.6%
Baltimore City	no recertification/no redetermination	5,204	28.6%
	work sanction	3,560	19.6%
	eligibility/verification information - not provided	3,134	17.2%
	income above limit (including started work)	3,100	17.0%
	not eligible	915	5.0%

Full Family Sanctions: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

Maryland imposes a full family sanction - termination of the entire cash assistance benefit - when the adult recipient does not comply with work participation requirements or cooperate with child support enforcement. There is a mandatory 30 day conciliation period before the first full family sanction can be imposed, but state law requires a full, rather than partial, sanction upon the first instance of non-compliance. The following sections describe patterns of sanctioning statewide and by jurisdiction.

Full Family Sanctions: Statewide Data

Following this discussion, Table 7 illustrates the frequency with which work and child support sanctions were used statewide and in each of the 24 jurisdictions during the fifth year of reform. The table shows that almost one in five cases (19.4% or 6,013/31,088) closed due to a full family sanction. This is a demonstrable increase from previous years. In year one, just 6.1% of all cases were closed with a full family sanction. In years two and three the percentage increased to 11.7%, and by the fourth year 18.5% were given full-family sanctions. Although year five closings due to sanctions were up by only one percentage point from year four, all of the increase is attributable to the growth in child support sanctions.

Consistent with the pattern observed in the first four years of reform, virtually all year five sanctions were for non-compliance with work. Specifically, among all case closures statewide, 16.9% (n=5,244/31,088) were work-related full family sanctions and 2.5% (n=769/31,088) were full family sanctions for non-cooperation with child support. In other words, of all full family sanctions imposed during the fifth year of reform, 87.2% were work sanctions and 12.8% were child support sanctions. The findings on child

support sanctions are noteworthy because they represent an increase from year four not only in absolute terms, but also relative to other closing reasons.

Full Family Sanctions: Jurisdictional Data

As was true in the first four years of reform, the use of work- and child support-related full family sanctions varied widely across the state. For the first time, however, the number of case closings due to child support non-cooperation equaled or exceeded those due to work sanctions in some places. Specifically, this situation was observed in three Eastern Shore counties (Kent, Talbot, and Wicomico).

Jurisdictions with the highest percentages of all cases closed due to a work sanction were: Calvert County (n=48 or 27.0%), Baltimore County (n=698 or 22.6%), Somerset County (n=23 or 21.1%), Baltimore City (n=3,560 or 19.6%), Howard County (n=33 or 19.5%), and Montgomery County (n=158 or 16.6%). Conversely, full family work sanctions were most infrequent in Talbot (n=4 or 4.5%), Wicomico (n=13 or 2.7%), Kent (n=1 or 2.6%), and St. Mary's (n=1 or 0.6%) Counties.

Statewide, sanctions for non-cooperation with child support were relatively rare (2.5% of all closures) during the fifth year of reform, but intra-state variations were evident. Jurisdictions with the highest proportions of child support sanctions were the counties of Talbot (n=9 or 10.2%) and Garrett (n=7 or 5.8%). In three counties (Somerset, St. Mary's, and Worcester) there were no reported closures for non-cooperation with child support in the fifth year of reform.

Table 7. Full Family Sanctions: October 2000 - September 2001.

	Full Family Sanctions	Frequency	Percent
Maryland	Work Child Support	5,244 769	16.9% 2.5%
Allegany	Work Child Support	34 1	14.7% 0.4%
Anne Arundel	Work Child Support	169 12	10.5% 0.7%
Baltimore County	Work Child Support	698 51	22.6% 1.7%
Calvert	Work Child Support	48 1	27.0% 0.6%
Caroline	Work Child Support	12 1	8.8% 0.7%
Carroll	Work Child Support	29 2	13.4% 0.9%
Cecil	Work Child Support	67 4	17.3% 1.0%
Charles	Work Child Support	38 7	8.9% 1.6%
Dorchester	Work Child Support	40 9	12.5% 2.8%
Frederick	Work Child Support	29 2	7.3% 0.5%
Garrett	Work Child Support	19 7	15.8% 5.8%
Harford	Work Child Support	29 5	5.8% 1.0%
Howard	Work Child Support	33 4	19.5% 2.4%
Kent	Work Child Support	1 1	2.6% 2.6%
Montgomery	Work Child Support	158 25	16.6% 2.6%
Prince George's	Work Child Support	162 54	5.8% 1.9%
Queen Anne's	Work Child Support	13 1	15.5% 1.2%
St. Mary's	Work Child Support	1 0	0.6% 0.0%

	Full Family Sanctions	Frequency	Percent
Somerset	Work Child Support	23 0	21.1% 0.0%
Talbot	Work Child Support	4 9	4.5% 10.2%
Washington	Work Child Support	44 8	14.7% 2.7%
Wicomico	Work Child Support	13 14	2.7% 2.9%
Worcester	Work Child Support	20 0	17.9% 0.0%
Baltimore City	Work Child Support	3,560 551	19.6% 3.0%

Conclusion

This paper provides descriptive information on all 31,088 cases that exited cash assistance between October 2000 and September 2001, the fifth year of welfare reform in Maryland. The report provides statewide data about those closures, and data for each of the state's 24 local jurisdictions. Prior reports have presented data for the first through fourth years of reform, as well as trends across these years.¹⁹

The total number of exiting cases is, as expected, less in year five (n=31,088) than in years four (n=31,482), three (n=37,997), two (n=40,773) and one (n=41,212). However, general exiting patterns, case closing reasons, and case/payee characteristics are similar in all five years.

Notably, the proportion of cases which exited because of full family sanctioning in year five (19.4%, n=6,013 / 31,088 cases) is higher than the proportion closed for this reason in previous years (6.1% in year one, 11.7% in years two and three, and 18.5% in year four). The increase can be attributed first to the fact that over time Baltimore City has made much greater use of work sanctions. Of all year five City closures, 19.6% (n=3,560) were for non-compliance with work requirements. This is only a marginal change over year four (18.6% or n=3,185), but is a dramatic increase over year one.²⁰ Second, child support sanctions have increased in both absolute and relative terms from year four. That work and child support sanctions have increased over time is not surprising, but it is a trend that we and others should continue to monitor closely.

¹⁹ See: Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (April, 1998). *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The First Year of FIP*, (June, 1999) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Second Year of FIP*, (April 2000) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Third Year of FIP*, and (September, 2000) *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Fourth Year of FIP*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

²⁰ Work-related full family sanctioning rates in Baltimore City for the first, second, and third years of reform were 1.9% (n=267), 8.6% (n=1,504), and 9.6% (n=1,956), respectively.

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Appendix B. Map of Maryland

