

CASELOAD EXITS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: THE EIGHTH YEAR OF FIP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reports in the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* series provide statewide and jurisdiction-level information on the universe of welfare case closings occurring in a particular time period. This report, the tenth in the series, is based on the 24,857 unduplicated cases that closed during the eighth year of welfare reform in Maryland (October 2003 to September 2004).¹ In addition to profiling the characteristics and administrative case closing codes of all families leaving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA, Maryland's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program), today's report examines the unique circumstances of child only leavers. Emerging research on active cases indicates that child only cases differ from traditional welfare cases in their characteristics, welfare and employment participation patterns, and service needs. Thus, we address two broad research questions for both traditional welfare cases and child only cases:

1. **What are the statewide and jurisdictional trends in cash assistance case closings during the seventh year of welfare reform?**
2. **Statewide and for each subdivision, what is the profile of cases that closed and what are the administrative reasons for case closure?**

Following are highlights of major study findings:

- **The total number of closings declined in the eighth year of reform to 24,857. On average, 2,000 TCA cases close each month.**

Since the mid-1990s, much research and policy attention has focused on the unprecedented declines in welfare caseloads. In Maryland, more than 40,000 cases closed in the first year of welfare reform. The number of closings occurring each year has decreased steadily since then, with just one slight increase in the sixth year of reform. The 24,857 closings in the eighth year of reform is the lowest number since the first year of reform.

- **Child only cases make up a significant minority of statewide closures. However, they are underrepresented among closings, relative to their proportion in the active caseload.**

Statewide child only cases account for one-fifth of case closures. In nine jurisdictions, one-fourth or more of all TCA closures occur among child only cases. While these proportions represent a significant increase over those observed in the early years of reform, it's important to note that they are only about half of the corresponding

¹ In this report, a 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". For this reason, the number of cases we report may differ from the number reported by the Maryland Department of Human Resources for the same period.

proportions in the active TANF caseload. In other words, child only cases are twice as common among the active welfare caseload as they are among welfare exiters.

The vast majority (71.5%) of child only cases exiting TCA are ones where the child's parent does not reside in the home. An additional 23.2% of cases are ones where the parent is present, but receives SSI. Compared to the active TANF caseload, non-parental cases are slightly underrepresented among child only closures.

- **Baltimore City accounts for slightly more than half (51.1%) of all statewide closures. Two-fifths of closings occur in either Baltimore County (9.5%) or Prince George's County (10.8%).**
- **In general, proportions of statewide closings are in line with caseload shares.**

In the eighth year of reform, seven jurisdictions had equal percentages of TCA closures and average annual TCA caseload. Small, positive differences between caseload and closing percentages were observed in 14 counties, indicating that most jurisdictions closed slightly more cases than would be expected based on their caseload shares.

Only three jurisdictions closed fewer cases than expected. For Wicomico County, the difference between its closings share and caseload share is a negligible 0.1 percentage point. The differences for the other two jurisdictions are more substantial. Prince George's County accounted for 11.9% of the average annual TCA caseload, but only 10.8% of year eight closings. This difference of -1.1 percentage points is an improvement over the -1.6 percentage points observed in the previous year (Born, Hetling & Saunders, 2004).

For Baltimore City, the gap between its caseload and closing shares widened in the eighth year of reform. In the seventh year (October 2002 – September 2003), case closings in Baltimore City were 1.0 percentage point less than would be expected based on its proportion of the average annual statewide TANF caseload. This difference grew to -3.3 percentage points in the eighth year. For policymakers and program managers, this trend may be of concern because, if it continues, the statewide caseload may become even more concentrated in the City.

- **The profile of a typical family exiting welfare remains the same as in earlier years. However, child only leavers differ from other leavers in several important respects.**

A typical case closure during the eighth year of reform occurred for an assistance unit with one adult (77.2%) and one (47.1%) or two (28.0%) children, the youngest of whom is almost six years old (mean = 5.89 years). The adult heading the case is typically an African American (79.3%) woman (95.3%) in her early thirties (mean = 33.68 years). Three out of four families were ending a welfare spell that lasted for 12 months or less (76.3%).

Consistent with our previous studies, we find that child only cases differ from other types of cases in terms of welfare history, age of payee, number of children and age of youngest child. Child only cases are exiting from a welfare spell that has lasted an average of 23.25 months, or almost two years. In contrast, the average exit spell length for traditional cases is only 8.63 months. Eight out of ten traditional cases (82.4%) experience a case closure after receiving TANF for one year or less; only a little more than half (51.6%) of child only cases exit welfare so quickly.

Adults heading child only cases are also significantly older than their counterparts in traditional cases. The average payee for a child only case is 47 years old (mean = 46.62), about 16 years older than the typical payee in a traditional case (mean = 30.49 years). Undoubtedly the prevalence of grandparents and other relatives among child only cases explains much of this age difference.

The final differences observed between child only and other case types concern the children included in the assistance unit. In general, child only cases have fewer children and the children tend to be older than those in traditional cases. Almost two-thirds of child only cases (63.2%) have only one child recipient, compared to about two-fifths of traditional cases (43.2%).

The youngest – and typically only – child in child only cases is, on average, nine years old (mean = 8.94 years). In contrast, the average age of the youngest child in traditional cases is only a little over five years (mean = 5.16). More notable is the fact that almost half of traditional cases (45.7%) include at least one child under the age of three; less than one-fifth (17.7%) of child only cases include a child that young.

Data on the ages of children whose families are leaving welfare is particularly important as policy makers and program managers consider how best to allocate scarce child care resources. Child only cases present a unique challenge because they are not required to participate in work activities to receive TANF. However, many case heads, particularly non-parental ones, do work and may be in need of child care assistance. For example, a previous study showed that over two-fifths (42.5%) of all relative caregivers in the active caseload were employed in October 2003 (Hetling, et al., 2005). Jurisdictional data reveal that one-tenth (Calvert County) to three-tenths (St. Mary's County) of child only cases include a child under the age of three. For these cases, child care assistance may be a particularly important post-exit support.

- **For all cases, the top three administratively-recorded closure codes are the same in the eighth year of reform as in previous years: “No Recertification/No Redetermination” (22.3%); “Income Above Limit (including Started Work)” (22.0%); and “Work Sanction” (19.5%). Administrative closure codes differ for child only cases and traditional cases. Most traditional closures are work-related while child only cases tend to close for technical eligibility-related reasons.**

Although the top two reasons have been consistent over the course of reform, it's important to note that the percentage of cases closed with the code “No Recertification/No Redetermination” has declined and the percentage closed because of

“Income Above Limit” has increased. The result is that in year eight the two codes account for virtually the same proportion of cases, a little less than one in four closures. Moreover, “Income Above Limit (including Started Work)” is the most common closing reason in 19 of the 24 jurisdictions, accounting for a low of 23.1% of Allegany closures to more than two-fifths (45.3%) of Calvert closures

One-fifth (19.5%) of all cases exiting between October 2003 and September 2004 closed because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work activities, the third most common administrative closure code. This represents an increase over the sanctioning rates observed in the early years of reform. However, the percentage of cases closed because of a work sanction is the same in year eight as it was in year seven, indicating perhaps a leveling off in sanctioning rates. The fact that the rate of full family sanctioning for work requirements did not increase, even after the full implementation of Maryland’s universal engagement policy, is encouraging and suggests that local departments have been successful in engaging customers in activities without resorting to the use of sanctions.

Among child only case closures, more than two-fifths (43.2%) closed with the code “No Recertification/No Redetermination”. An additional 16.1% closed because they were no longer eligible, and 12.7% exited because they requested case closure. In total, these three reasons account for almost three-fourths of child only case closures. These findings suggest that child only cases exit welfare primarily because their circumstances have changed in some way so that they no longer qualify or feel they no longer need assistance. Given that most child only cases are headed by a non-parental caregiver, it is possible that the TANF case closure occurs when the child or children return to their parent’s household.

Among traditional cases, the role of work in leaving welfare is evident. One-fourth of traditional cases closed with the code “Income Above Limit”. An additional one-fourth left the rolls because of a full family sanction for not complying with work activity requirements. The third most common closing reason, “Eligibility Verification Not Provided”, accounted for 18.5% of traditional case closures.

In sum, there are several policy and program relevant conclusions from the findings presented here. The concentration of the state’s welfare caseload in its only major city is important to consider relative to increased work participation requirements that will likely result from the eventual reauthorization of TANF. Earlier studies have demonstrated that the implementation of new policies and practices generally takes longer in major urban areas (see, for example, Ovwigho, Saunders, Kolupanowich, & Born, 2005). Because Baltimore City has the largest caseload, trends in the City strongly influence statewide results and the reality of case closing trends should be kept in mind as strategies to meet new performance measures and goals are adopted.

A second implication of the case closing data is that, because child only cases now comprise a sizable minority of welfare leavers and have some unique characteristics, agencies may need to evaluate if there is a need for special transitional or post-exit services for this population. For example, with few child only cases closing for work-related reasons and thus qualifying for transitional medical assistance, health insurance may be a particular concern among child only leavers.

Finally, the trend of increasing proportions of child only cases, particularly those where the parent is not present in the home, among the active TANF caseload is likely to continue. Child only cases present a unique challenge in today's welfare environment. In the early years of reform, the fact that child only cases are exempt from time limits and work requirements resulted in their being largely ignored in public discourse and welfare-related research. As traditional cases left the rolls and child only cases became a larger share of the caseload, more attention focused on these types of cases. Today most program managers and policymakers realize that this special population may have service needs beyond a monthly check. Amid the discussions of increasing work requirements and participation rates, the challenge remains to craft a program that will best serve all children in need, regardless of the administrative case type their family happens to be.

INTRODUCTION

Through its decades-long collaboration with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR), the University of Maryland's School of Social Work studies the implementation, operation and outcomes of welfare reform in Maryland. Three report series and numerous special projects are produced through the partnership.² The most renowned project is the *Life After Welfare* study, consisting of ten reports to date, which monitors the short- and long-term post-exit experiences of more than ten thousand randomly-selected families who have left welfare since the beginning of welfare reform (October 1996). By providing empirical case- and individual-level data to policymakers and administrators, the *Life After Welfare* study is useful for gauging the progress of welfare reform in Maryland, identifying program modifications that may be needed and assessing outcomes for Maryland families who no longer receive cash assistance.

A second series, *Life On Welfare*, profiles Maryland's current TANF caseload, and considers whether there are differences between those receiving assistance today and those who have utilized the program in earlier years. Five reports have been issued thus far in this series. Most importantly, the *Life On Welfare* data have documented that child only cases are now a significant proportion of the statewide caseload and more than 40% of the caseload in 17 of 24 jurisdictions. Moreover, we have also found that the demographic characteristics, employment and social service utilization patterns of child only cases differ from those of traditional cases, indicating that they may have different service needs.

Our third series, *Caseload Exits at the Local Level*, differs from the first two in that it uses data on the entire universe of welfare leavers and provides information about Maryland welfare leavers not covered in the *Life After Welfare* study. By design, the *Life After Welfare* reports present detailed follow-up employment, recidivism and other data about a statewide random sample of exiting cases. In contrast, *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* reports examine the entire universe of cases which exited cash assistance in Maryland during a given year. Thus far, seven yearly reports and two multi-year reports have been issued.

Today's *Caseload Exits* report examines all cases that closed during the eighth full year of welfare reform and allows us to answer a number of questions germane to program monitoring and planning. The main questions of interest are:

1. What are the general trends in case closings in the eighth year of reform statewide and across jurisdictions?
2. How does each jurisdiction's share of closings compare to its share of the overall caseload for the same period of time?
3. What is the general statewide profile of all year eight exiting cases 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?

² To obtain copies of research reports produced through the partnership, go to www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu.

4. 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?
5. What are the most common administratively-recorded reasons for case closure?
6. What proportion of cases, statewide and in each subdivision, left welfare during the eighth year because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work requirements or non-cooperation with child support?

This report, the tenth in the *Caseload Exits* series, is based on the 24,857 unduplicated cases that closed during the eighth year of reform (October 2003 - September 2004).

Because of the increasing importance of child only cases in welfare policy discussions, a new feature in today's report is the presentation of data separately for child only and traditional (non-child only) closures. Emerging research on active cases indicates that child only cases differ from traditional welfare case in their characteristics, participation patterns, and service needs. However, there has been virtually no published data on child-only cases that exit welfare. Adjusting our presentation of findings to show child-only and traditional case closure patterns separately permits this report and future *Caseload Exits* reports to provide policy-makers with information about an increasingly important, but heretofore not highly visible population.

METHODS

Sample

A case closing (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) for at least one day. 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 in the Family Investment Administration’s statistical reports for the same period of time.

In addition, findings presented throughout this report are based on closures for two types of cases: child only cases (n=4,919) and traditional cases (n=19,938). Child only cases are those with at least one participating child, but no participating adults in the assistance unit. Child only cases may be those in which children are living with an adult other than their parent (i.e. a relative) who is not personally in need of or eligible for cash assistance. These also may be cases in which the child’s parent is in the home but has been sanctioned for non-cooperation with substance abuse screening, ineligible for benefits because of immigration status, or ineligible due to receiving other government benefits, such as SSI (Supplemental Security Income).

Because child only case heads are generally exempt from time limits and work requirements, they tend to have longer welfare spells, and tend to experience different types of closures when compared to traditional cases. In fact, as the traditional welfare caseload continues to decline, the proportion of child only cases in the active caseload continues to increase (Hetling, Saunders, and Born 2005b). For these reasons, this report separates the overall sample to take a closer look at closures among these two types of cases.

Data Sources

Aggregate data on case closings 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 customers’ 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 case closings throughout the state, the extract files created from the administrative data system also contain the following data that are presented in this report:

- Assistance unit size - number of individuals included in a TCA grant;
- Case composition - number of children and adults included in a TCA grant;
- Application and case closing 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.

FINDINGS

The following results come from data on the universe of unique cases (n = 24,857) that exited Maryland's TANF program, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), at least once between October 2003 and September 2004. Analyses include both statewide and jurisdictional descriptions of these cases and are presented in the following sections:

- Case Closings by Month
- Case Closings by Case Type and Jurisdiction
- Case Closings Relative to Caseload Size
- Characteristics of Exiting Cases and Payees: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses for All Cases, Child Only Cases, and Traditional Cases
- Administrative Case Closure Codes: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses for All Cases, Child Only Cases, and Traditional Cases
- Full Family Sanctions: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses for All Cases

Case Closings by Month

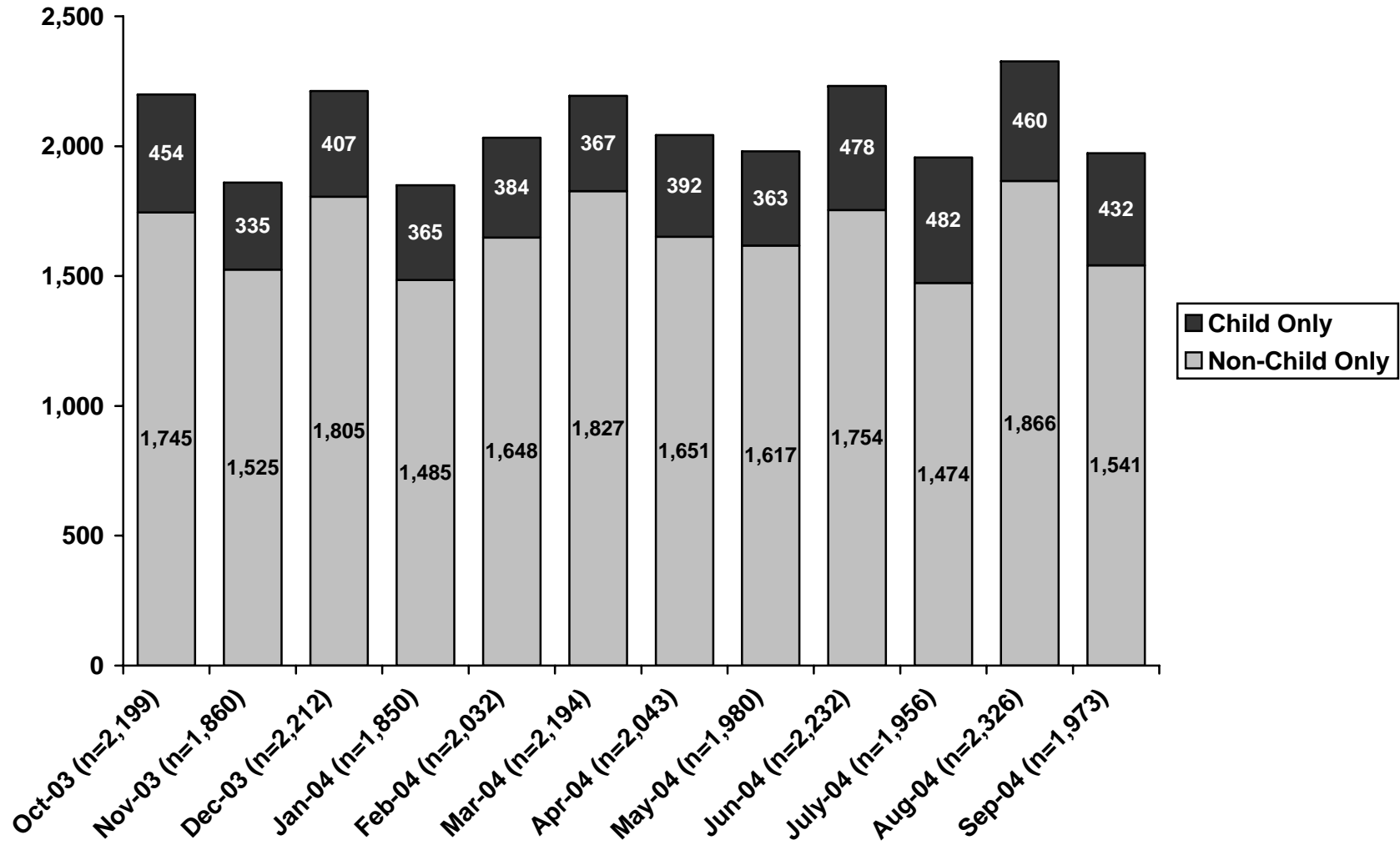
A total of 24,857 cases closed for at least one day between October 2003 and September 2004, including 19,938 (80.2%) traditional closures and 4,919 (19.8%) child only closures. As in most years, the total number of closing cases declined from the previous year, with 491 fewer cases closing in year eight than in year seven. The only exception to this trend was during the sixth year of welfare reform (October 2001 to September 2002). Due to this declining trend, the 24,857 cases during the eighth year is the lowest total closing since the beginning of welfare reform.

As shown in Figure 1, total closings averaged about 2,000 per month during year eight. Total monthly closings fluctuate by roughly 200 to 300 cases, but there does not appear to be a pattern to this variation. The smallest number (n=1,850) occurred in January 2004 while the largest number (n=2,326) was observed in August 2004.

Traditional (i.e., non-child only) case closures averaged about 1,650 per month during year eight, ranging from a low of 1,474 in July 2004 to a high of 1,866 in August 2004. In each of the 12 months, traditional cases accounted for the lion's share of all closures, accounting for between 75.3% (July 2004) and 81.9% (November 2003) of all closures.

Several hundred child only cases also closed each month during year eight. The lowest number of such closures (n=335) was observed in November 2003 while the highest (n=478) occurred in June 2004. Overall, child only cases accounted for about one of every five closures (19.8%, n=4,919) during the eighth year of reform. This is an increase over the 15% of year one closures accounted for by such cases (Born, Caudill, Spera & Cordero, 1998). However, relative to their share of the active TCA caseload, child only cases continue to be under-represented among welfare exiters. That is, child only cases accounted for about one-third of the active caseload at the beginning of the eighth year of reform (October 2003), but only one-fifth of all closures which took place over the eighth full year. Though not surprising given that child only cases tend to have significantly longer welfare spells, this finding is noteworthy in terms of its fiscal and programmatic implications for the future.

Figure 1. Statewide Case Closings by Month

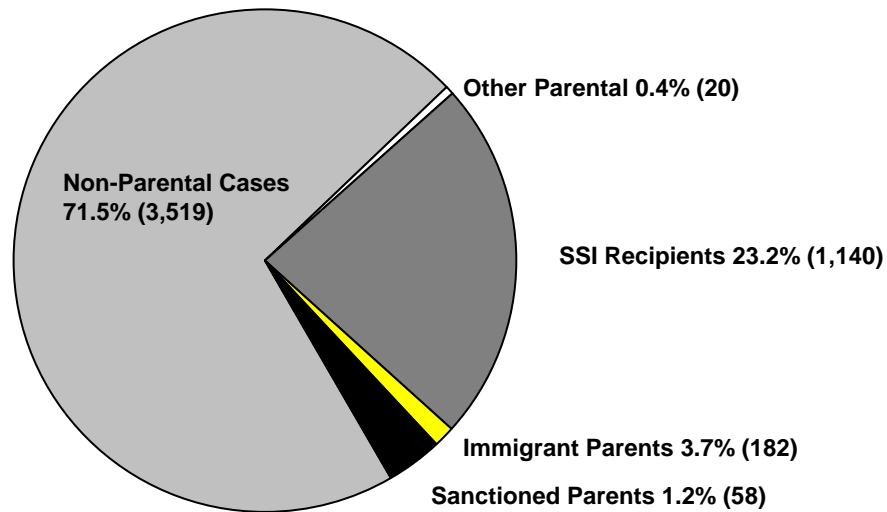


Types of Child Only Closings

As mentioned earlier, this annual report differs from others in the series in that we present analyses separately for child only and traditional cases. Other studies demonstrating the unique characteristics, welfare experiences, and possible service needs of child only cases speak to the importance of attending to this special population when evaluating the progress and potential of welfare reform (Farrel, et al., 2000; Wood and Strong, 2002). Examining the characteristics and experiences of child only cases exiting the welfare rolls as they compare to traditional cases will shed light on why these families exit TANF and perhaps also provide some hints as to what types of post-exit supports they may need.

Before examining the exiting data, it is important to acknowledge that child only cases in and of themselves are a diverse group. Figure 2, following this discussion, shows the types of child only cases among the universe of cases exiting TANF during the eighth year of welfare reform in Maryland. Similar to previous studies of the active TANF caseload, we find that most (71.5%) child only exiting cases are ones where an adult other than a parent is the case head. The next largest subgroup, accounting for almost one-fourth (23.2%) of child only cases, are parents who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These proportions are generally similar to those found among the active TANF caseload, although non-parental cases are slightly underrepresented among exiting cases. Non-parental cases accounted for three-fourths (75.2%) of active child only cases (Hetling, et al., 2005b).

Figure 2. Types of Child Only Closings



Note: Sanctioned parents include those who have not compiled with substance abuse requirements, those who have intentionally violated program requirements, or those who have been convicted of a drug felony in the past. These adults are ineligible for cash assistance, but their children remain eligible.

Case Closings by Jurisdiction

Although Maryland is a small state, it is quite diverse in many ways including population and nature and robustness of local economies. The availability of data on the universe of case closings during the eighth year of welfare reform allows us to examine how our state's diversity is reflected in patterns of welfare exits at the jurisdictional level. In Table 1 which follows this discussion, we look at the number and percent of statewide case closings (total, child-only, traditional) accounted for by each jurisdiction. Later on in the report, in Table 3, we rotate the analytic lens to show, for each jurisdiction, the percentages of its total year eight closings that were accounted for by child only and traditional cases. Both perspectives are important in understanding challenges which lie ahead for the state, but also for local subdivisions and Departments of Social Services.

Table 1. Number of Closing Cases by Type and Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Child Only Cases	Traditional Cases	All Cases
Allegany	1.1% (55)	0.8% (153)	0.8% (208)
Anne Arundel	6.3% (308)	5.0% (993)	5.2% (1,301)
Baltimore County	11.1% (547)	9.1% (1,808)	9.5% (2,355)
Calvert	0.4% (22)	0.5% (106)	0.5% (128)
Caroline	0.9% (42)	0.5% (101)	0.6% (143)
Carroll	0.7% (36)	0.5% (109)	0.6% (145)
Cecil	1.3% (66)	1.3% (266)	1.3% (332)
Charles	2.1% (105)	1.5% (309)	1.7% (414)
Dorchester	1.3% (65)	1.4% (285)	1.4% (350)
Frederick	1.5% (75)	1.4% (289)	1.5% (364)
Garrett	0.2% (9)	0.4% (77)	0.3% (86)
Harford	2.5% (121)	3.0% (596)	2.9% (717)
Howard	1.1% (54)	1.3% (250)	1.2% (304)
Kent	0.3% (17)	0.2% (30)	0.2% (47)
Montgomery	4.4% (217)	4.3% (866)	4.4% (1,083)
Prince George's	13.8% (681)	10.0% (1,999)	10.8% (2,680)
Queen Anne's	0.4% (18)	0.4% (72)	0.4% (90)
St. Mary's	1.3% (64)	1.1% (224)	1.2% (288)
Somerset	0.5% (24)	0.5% (90)	0.5% (114)
Talbot	0.7% (34)	0.3% (65)	0.4% (99)
Washington	2.0% (98)	1.2% (240)	1.4% (338)
Wicomico	2.2% (106)	1.7% (343)	1.8% (449)
Worcester	0.7% (32)	0.4% (78)	0.4% (110)
Baltimore City	43.2% (2,123)	53.1% (10,589)	51.1% (12,712)
Statewide Total	100.0% (4,919)	100.0% (19,938)	100.0% (24,857)

As expected given that they have the largest active TCA caseloads, Table 1 shows that the majority (71.4%, n=17,747/24,857) of all year eight case closures are accounted for by three jurisdictions: Baltimore city and the counties of Prince George's and Baltimore. Baltimore City alone had half of all closures during the year (51.1%, n=12,712/24,857), while Prince George's and Baltimore Counties each represented about one of every 10 statewide closures during the period. Anne Arundel County had 5.2% of all closures statewide in year eight (n=1,301/24,857); no other jurisdiction accounted for more than 4.4% of all statewide closures.

These jurisdictional patterns generally hold true when child only and traditional cases are examined separately. Baltimore City (43.2%, n=2,123/4,919), Prince George's

County (13.8%, n=681/4,919) and Baltimore County (11.1%, n=547/4,919) account for the largest shares of child only closures and for the largest shares of traditional closures, the latter percentages being 53.1%, 10.0% and 9.1%, respectively. However, Table 1 does reveal that Baltimore City accounted for a notably smaller share of all child only exits (43.2%) than it did of traditional exits (53.1%).

In contrast, the table shows that in 15 of Maryland's 23 counties, the opposite pattern prevails: each of these jurisdictions accounted for a larger share of statewide child only closures than it did of statewide closures among traditional cases. Most of these latter jurisdictions are located on the Eastern Shore (Caroline, Kent, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester), Southern (Charles, St. Mary's) or Western Maryland (Allegany, Frederick, Washington). It is noteworthy that the large metropolitan counties (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, Prince George's) also have a greater share of total statewide child only closures than their share of total closures among traditional cases.

Case Closings Relative to Caseload Size

Variability in caseload size among Maryland's 24 jurisdictions makes it difficult to exact real-world meaning from data describing raw totals of case closings at the local level. Because monthly TCA caseloads can range from about 50 cases in Kent County to more than 15,000 in Baltimore City, a more informative approach is to measure each jurisdiction's share of statewide case closings relative to its share of the statewide average active caseload over the same time period (October 2003 to September 2004).

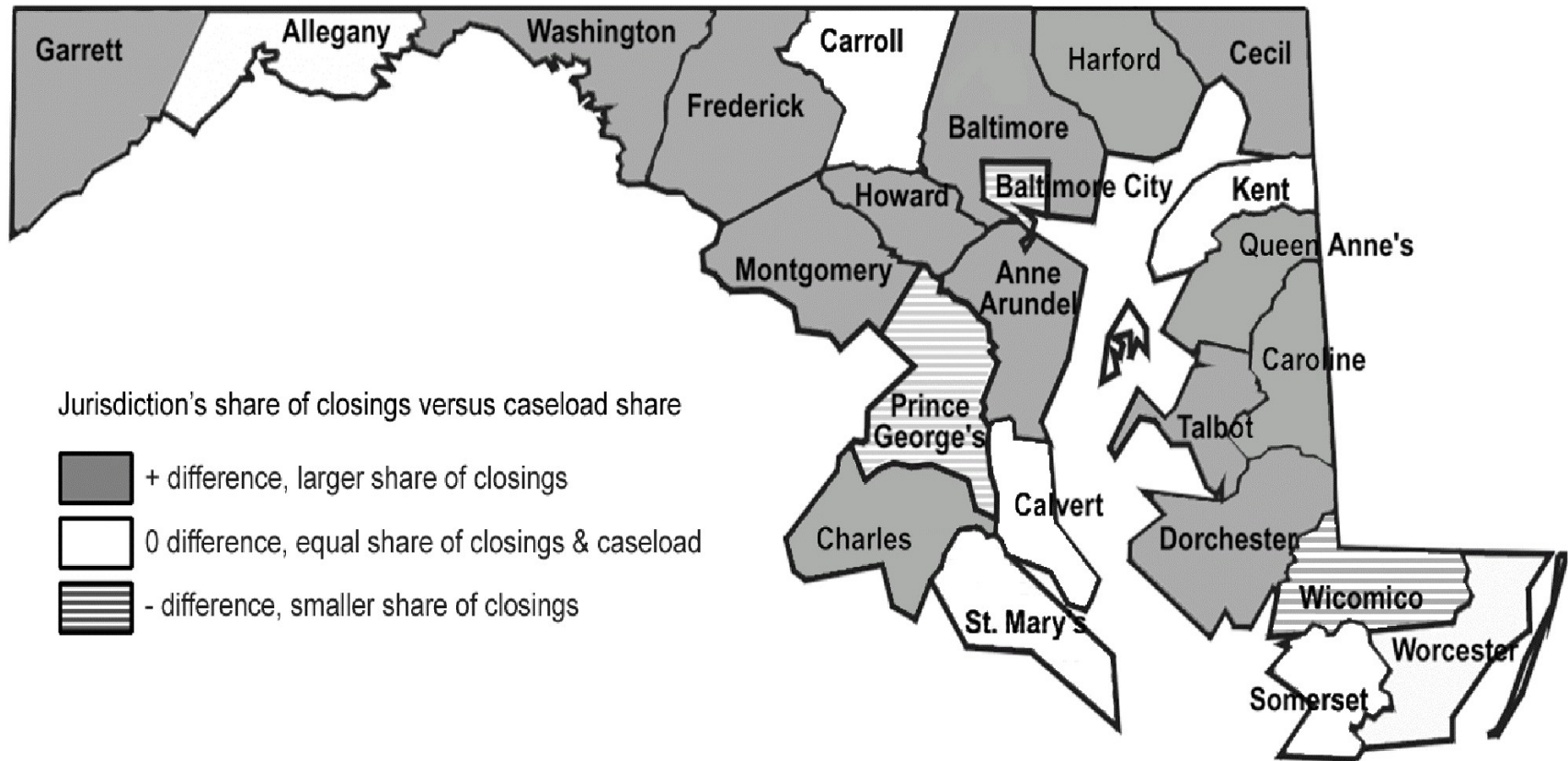
Figure 3, following this discussion, presents a map of Maryland with individual jurisdictions shaded according to the type of difference found. Localities with more closings proportionately than cases are colored grey, fewer closings proportionately than cases are depicted by a horizontal striped pattern, and where no difference exists, jurisdictions are white. A detailed data table is provided in Appendix A.

In general, proportions of statewide closings are in line with caseload shares. Seven jurisdictions had equal percentages of closures and average active caseload. Small, positive differences between caseload and closing percentages were observed in 14 counties, indicating that most jurisdictions closed slightly more cases than would be expected based on their caseload shares.

Only three jurisdictions (Baltimore City, and the counties of Prince George's and Wicomico) closed fewer cases than expected. For Wicomico County, the difference between its closings share and caseload share is a negligible 0.1 percentage point. The differences for the other two jurisdictions are more substantial. Prince George's County accounted for 11.9% of the average TCA caseload, but only 10.8% of year eight closings. This difference of -1.1 percentage points is an improvement over the -1.6 percentage points observed in the previous year (Born, Hetling & Saunders, 2004).

For Baltimore City, the gap between its caseload and closing shares widened in year eight to -3.3 percentage points, compared to -1.0 percentage points in year seven (October 2002 – September 2003). For policymakers and program managers, this trend may be of concern. If the slower rate of case closures in Baltimore City continues, the statewide caseload is likely to become even more concentrated in the City.

Figure 3. Difference Between Percent of Closings and Percent of Caseload by Jurisdiction



Characteristics of Exiting Cases and Payees: Statewide

The previous section described the distribution of TCA closures occurring in the eighth year of reform across time and jurisdictions. In this section, we turn to the question of who left the welfare rolls between October 2003 and September 2004. Table 2, following this discussion, presents data on case and payee characteristics for child only and traditional case closures statewide, including: length of exiting spell; number of adults; number of children; size of assistance unit; race; gender; age; age at first birth; and age of youngest child.

As can be seen in Table 2, a typical case closure during the eighth year of reform occurred for an assistance unit with one adult (77.2%) and one (47.1%) or two (28.0%) children, the youngest of whom is almost six years old (mean = 5.89 years). The adult heading the case is typically an African American (79.3%) woman (95.3%) in her early thirties (mean = 33.68 years). Three out of four families were ending a welfare spell that lasted for 12 months or less (76.3%).

Our previous studies of the active TANF caseload have revealed a number of differences between child only cases and other case types in terms of case characteristics and welfare utilization patterns. Not surprisingly, we find similar differences among exiting cases, with child only cases differing significantly from traditional cases on nearly all case and payee characteristics examined.

Consistent with our previous studies, we find that compared to traditional cases, child only cases had been on welfare continuously for longer periods of time before the closure that brought them into our sample. Table 2 shows that child only cases are exiting from a welfare spell that has lasted an average of 23.25 months, or almost two years. In contrast, the average exit spell length for traditional cases is only 8.63 months. In addition, eight out of ten traditional cases (82.4%) experience a case closure after receiving TANF for one year or less; only a little more than half (51.6%) of child only cases exit welfare so quickly.

The majority of exiting payees, regardless of case type, are African-American. However, the proportion of African-American payees is slightly, though significantly, lower among child only cases (76.2%) than among traditional cases (80.0%).

Adults heading child only cases are also significantly older than their counterparts in traditional cases. The average payee in a child only case is 47 years old (mean = 46.62), about 16 years older than the typical payee in a traditional case (mean = 30.49 years).

The final differences observed between child only and traditional exiting cases concern the children included in the assistance units. In general, child only cases contain fewer children and older children than those in traditional cases. Almost two-thirds of child only cases (63.2%) have only one child recipient, compared to about two-fifths of traditional cases (43.2%).

The youngest – and typically only – child in child only exiting cases is, on average, nine years old (mean = 8.94 years). In contrast, the average age of the youngest child in

traditional exiting cases is only a little over five years (mean = 5.16). Notable also is the fact that almost half of traditional cases (45.7%) include at least one child under the age of three; less than one-fifth (17.7%) of child only cases include a child that young. In general, the profile differences observed between traditional and child only exiting cases are consistent with profile differences also found to exist between the two types of cases in the active caseload (Hetling, et al., 2005).

Table 2. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics: Statewide

	Child Only Cases	Traditional Cases	All Cases
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	4,919	19,938	24,857
Length of Exiting Spell***			
12 months or less	51.6%	82.4%	76.3%
13-24 months	23.3%	13.9%	15.8%
25-36 months	9.9%	2.6%	4.0%
37-48 months	4.7%	0.7%	1.5%
49-60 months	3.2%	0.2%	0.8%
More than 60 months	7.3%	0.2%	1.6%
Mean***	23.25	8.63	11.52
Median	11.90	6.70	7.99
Range	1 - 396	1 - 335	1 - 396
Number of Adults			
0 (Child Only)	100.0%	0.0%	19.8%
1	0.0%	96.3%	77.2%
2	0.0%	3.7%	2.9%
Number of Children***			
0	0.0%	4.6%	3.7%
1	63.2%	43.2%	47.1%
2	24.1%	28.9%	28.0%
3 or more	12.7%	23.3%	21.2%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	63.2%	4.5%	16.1%
2	24.1%	42.1%	38.5%
3	8.4%	29.0%	24.9%
4 or more	4.3%	24.4%	20.4%
Mean	1.56	2.88	2.62
Median	1.00	3.00	2.00
Range	1 - 9	1 - 16	1 - 16
Race***			
% African American	76.2%	80.0%	79.3%
Gender***			
% Female	92.9%	95.9%	95.3%
Age of Payee			
Mean***	46.62	30.49	33.68
Median	46.04	28.50	31.16
Range	13 - 86	16 - 79	13 - 86
Estimated Age at First Birth			
Mean	--	21.62	21.62
Median	--	19.95	19.95
Range	--	11 - 48	11 - 48
% who gave birth before 18	--	26.0%	26.0%
% who gave birth before 21	--	59.6%	59.6%
Age of Youngest Child			
Mean***	8.94	5.16	5.89
Median	9.14	3.43	4.18
Range (years)	<1 yr - 18	<1 yr - 18	<1yr - 18
% cases with a child under 3***	17.7%	45.7%	40.3%

Note: Estimated Age at First Birth could not be calculated for child only cases, as the case head was most often not the mother of children in the household.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.0

Characteristics of Exiting Cases and Payees: Jurisdictional Analysis

As mentioned previously, the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level Series* is unique in that it provides information on case closings for Baltimore City and each of Maryland's 23 Counties. In this section, we describe the characteristics of families leaving welfare in each locality between October 2003 and September 2004. We first present data on all exiting cases and then separate profiles of child only and traditional cases.

All Cases

Table 3, which spans several pages following this discussion, presents data by jurisdiction on case and payee characteristics for TANF cases closing during the eighth year of reform. In all jurisdictions, the majority of families were exiting the rolls after receiving assistance for one year or less. However, the size of this short-term majority ranged from a low of less than two-thirds (64.3%) in Prince George's County to a high of almost nine out of ten (88.9%) in Queen Anne's County. Mean and median exit spell lengths also ranged widely. For example, in fourteen jurisdictions (Allegany, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, and Washington Counties) the median exit spell was less than six months, indicating that one out of two families in those localities received assistance for less than half the year before exiting.

In contrast, in two jurisdictions (Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties) half of case closures occurred after families had received TANF for nine or more months. This variability in exit spell length most likely reflects differences in case characteristics as well as local labor markets. At a minimum, it also suggests that some local departments are dealing with high amounts of caseload turnover, while others are facing the challenge of moving relatively longer-term customers off the rolls.

In terms of assistance unit size, most exiting cases across Maryland are of the traditional type and include one adult and one or two children. As noted previously, for the state as a whole, child only cases represented just about one of every five (19.8%) closures during reform's eighth year. However, Table 3 shows there is considerable variation across jurisdictions. In Garrett County, to illustrate, child only cases accounted for just about one in 10 closures (10.5%) while, at the other extreme, in Kent (36.1%) and Talbot (34.3%) Counties, child only cases accounted for one of every three closures.

Although not presented in the table, in general, proportions of child only cases among active caseloads are about twice the proportions of child only cases among the case closures. One exception is Garrett County, where the percent of child only cases among the active caseload was 40.0% in October 2004, compared to only 10.5% of closures between September 2003 and October 2004, almost a four-fold difference.

Regardless of jurisdiction, virtually all former TANF payees are female. The average age of exiting payees ranges from a low of 31.25 years in Garrett County to 37.96 years in Kent County. Differences in payee age undoubtedly relate to differences in the proportion of child only cases among the exiting cohorts.

We also find variability across local departments in the ethnicity of former TANF payees. Nine out of ten exiters in Prince George's County (93.4%) and Baltimore City (93.2%) are African-American. In contrast, only 2.4% of Garrett County leavers are of African American heritage. These differences are not surprising and reflect differences in the racial composition of the jurisdictions' populations.

The final row of Table 3 provides data on the ages of children whose families left welfare in Maryland in the eighth year of reform. The average age of the youngest child ranges widely from a low of about four years (mean = 4.33) in Washington County to a high of almost seven years (mean = 6.95) in Kent County. There is also considerable intra-state variation in the percentage of exiting cases with a child under the age of three. In most jurisdictions, at least two-fifths of families leaving TANF have a child under three years of age. In five localities (Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Washington, and Worcester), at least one-half of exiters have a very young child. At a minimum, these findings suggest that the need for and type of child care assistance for families transitioning from welfare to work will vary across Maryland's 24 subdivisions.

Table 3. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases

	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore County	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
Number of Unique Closings	208	1,301	2,355	128	143	145
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	76.4%	81.5%	79.5%	86.7%	69.2%	77.9%
13 - 24 months	13.5%	12.0%	13.3%	6.3%	17.5%	15.2%
25 - 36 months	6.7%	3.3%	3.3%	4.7%	6.3%	3.4%
37 - 48 months	1.9%	1.4%	1.4%	0.8%	2.1%	0.7%
49 - 60 months	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	0.0%	1.4%	0.7%
More than 60 months	1.0%	1.2%	1.6%	1.6%	3.5%	2.1%
Mean [Median]	9.50 [5.32]	10.25 [6.70]	9.83 [5.32]	8.14 [3.88]	14.48 [7.26]	9.29 [4.30]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.54 [2.00]	2.64 [2.00]	2.45 [2.00]	2.72 [2.00]	2.48 [2.00]	2.59 [2.00]
Number of Adults						
0 (Child Only)	26.4%	23.7%	23.2%	17.5%	29.4%	24.8%
1	69.7%	72.2%	74.7%	76.2%	67.1%	71.7%
2	3.8%	4.1%	2.1%	6.3%	3.5%	3.4%
Number of Children						
0	1.9%	3.9%	3.2%	2.4%	0.7%	4.1%
1	51.4%	45.8%	52.1%	48.4%	51.0%	44.1%
2	25.0%	27.4%	28.4%	24.6%	28.7%	28.3%
3 or more	21.6%	22.9%	16.2%	24.6%	19.6%	23.4%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	89.2%	40.6%	31.4%	53.7%	53.2%	80.1%
% African American	10.3%	56.2%	66.0%	46.3%	43.9%	17.7%
% Female	91.8%	95.3%	95.1%	90.6%	94.4%	93.8%
Mean Age [Median]	33.37 [30.92]	34.09 [32.23]	33.74 [31.31]	34.46 [34.33]	35.88 [34.63]	34.95 [32.40]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	5.40 [2.99]	5.59 [3.71]	5.65 [3.67]	6.51 [5.68]	6.47 [3.80]	5.61 [4.01]
% cases with a child under 3	50.5%	43.7%	45.2%	41.5%	40.6%	43.0%

Table 3. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (continued)

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford
Number of Unique Closings	332	414	350	364	86	717
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	83.1%	78.7%	74.9%	82.4%	83.7%	79.5%
13 - 24 months	10.2%	15.0%	16.0%	12.9%	7.0%	13.7%
25 - 36 months	1.5%	2.4%	4.0%	1.4%	3.5%	3.5%
37 - 48 months	1.2%	1.2%	2.0%	1.4%	1.2%	0.8%
49 - 60 months	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%
More than 60 months	3.0%	2.2%	2.6%	1.4%	4.7%	1.8%
Mean [Median]	10.34 [4.47]	10.14 [5.88]	11.04 [5.46]	9.18 [5.32]	10.47 [3.88]	11.32 [7.49]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.72 [2.00]	2.57 [2.00]	2.59 [2.00]	2.59 [2.00]	2.67 [3.00]	2.73 [3.00]
Number of Adults						
0 (Child Only)	19.9%	25.4%	18.6%	20.6%	10.5%	16.9%
1	71.1%	72.2%	77.7%	75.8%	74.4%	77.5%
2	9.0%	2.4%	3.7%	3.6%	15.1%	5.6%
Number of Children						
0	3.6%	1.9%	6.6%	2.5%	3.5%	2.9%
1	42.2%	48.1%	45.6%	51.6%	44.2%	44.2%
2	31.6%	30.7%	26.4%	25.0%	40.7%	29.8%
3 or more	22.6%	19.3%	21.5%	20.9%	11.6%	23.0%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	79.0%	31.2%	22.9%	53.1%	96.4%	46.4%
% African American	17.3%	67.1%	72.8%	43.0%	2.4%	49.2%
% Female	93.4%	97.1%	97.7%	94.8%	89.5%	95.4%
Mean Age [Median]	33.51 [31.35]	34.26 [31.81]	32.04 [29.33]	33.50 [30.49]	31.25 [29.46]	32.51 [30.17]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	5.89 [4.27]	5.90 [4.54]	5.48 [3.72]	4.79 [2.67]	4.55 [2.75]	5.29 [3.29]
% cases with a child under 3	40.1%	40.3%	42.1%	52.4%	54.9%	47.0%

Table 3. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (continued)

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
Number of Unique Closings	304	47	1,083	2,680	90	288
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	80.6%	85.1%	79.3%	64.3%	88.9%	75.7%
13 - 24 months	14.8%	10.6%	11.7%	21.6%	4.4%	15.3%
25 - 36 months	2.3%	2.1%	3.4%	6.7%	6.7%	4.2%
37 - 48 months	1.6%	0.0%	1.7%	2.9%	0.0%	1.0%
49 - 60 months	00.0%	2.1%	1.5%	1.8%	0.0%	1.4%
More than 60 months	0.7%	0.0%	2.4%	2.7%	0.0%	2.4%
Mean [Median]	8.68 [5.49]	7.26 [3.98]	11.44 [6.11]	15.41 [10.12]	6.23 [3.61]	13.34 [9.07]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.72 [2.00]	2.34 [2.00]	2.75 [3.00]	2.60 [2.00]	2.47 [2.00]	2.75 [3.00]
Number of Adults						
0 (Child Only)	17.8%	36.2%	20.2%	25.4%	20.0%	22.3%
1	74.3%	61.7%	74.6%	72.0%	75.6%	71.4%
2	7.9%	2.1%	5.2%	2.5%	4.4%	6.3%
Number of Children						
0	1.3%	0.0%	2.7%	5.2%	4.4%	1.4%
1	46.1%	51.1%	43.4%	45.8%	51.1%	44.9%
2	30.9%	34.0%	29.3%	26.5%	28.9%	29.3%
3 or more	21.7%	14.9%	24.6%	22.5%	15.6%	24.4%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	25.9%	50.0%	13.5%	3.5%	54.4%	51.1%
% African American	68.6%	47.8%	73.8%	93.4%	41.1%	46.4%
% Female	96.7%	91.5%	94.4%	95.2%	92.2%	93.1%
Mean Age [Median]	33.33 [31.58]	37.96 [36.19]	34.98 [33.16]	35.24 [33.04]	33.21 [31.89]	34.46 [33.08]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	5.33 [3.79]	6.95 [5.28]	5.72 [3.95]	6.19 [4.59]	5.64 [3.77]	5.81 [4.13]
% cases with a child under 3	43.4%	31.9%	42.9%	38.9%	38.8%	42.4%

Table 3. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (continued)

	Somerset	Talbot	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City
Number of Unique Closings	114	99	338	449	110	12,712
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	77.2%	78.8%	81.1%	78.8%	73.6%	76.4%
13 - 24 months	16.7%	10.1%	13.9%	14.7%	14.5%	16.5%
25 - 36 months	2.6%	5.1%	2.4%	3.6%	5.5%	4.0%
37 - 48 months	0.9%	2.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	1.3%
49 - 60 months	1.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.6%
More than 60 months	0.9%	3.0%	1.8%	1.8%	5.5%	1.2%
Mean [Median]	10.68 [6.05]	11.58 [4.73]	9.78 [5.52]	10.89 [7.89]	13.30 [6.38]	11.53 [8.91]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.51 [2.00]	2.24 [2.00]	2.41 [2.00]	2.73 [3.00]	2.55 [2.00]	2.65 [2.00]
Number of Adults						
0 (Child Only)	21.1%	34.3%	29.0%	23.6%	29.1%	16.7%
1	72.8%	62.6%	68.6%	72.2%	70.9%	81.1%
2	6.1%	3.0%	2.4%	4.2%	0.0%	2.2%
Number of Children						
0	1.8%	4.0%	2.4%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%
1	52.6%	52.5%	54.1%	39.4%	47.3%	47.1%
2	28.1%	30.3%	26.9%	30.5%	23.6%	27.8%
3 or more	17.5%	13.1%	16.6%	26.3%	25.5%	21.3%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	43.0%	39.6%	71.8%	22.8%	35.5%	6.0%
% African American	57.0%	52.1%	26.7%	74.0%	64.5%	93.2%
% Female	93.9%	93.9%	94.4%	96.9%	96.4%	95.6%
Mean Age [Median]	33.52 [29.97]	35.31 [32.55]	33.74 [29.63]	33.62 [28.94]	34.10 [31.64]	33.22 [30.45]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	5.53 [4.39]	6.13 [4.41]	4.33 [1.98]	5.20 [3.38]	4.77 [2.16]	6.10 [4.51]
% cases with a child under 3	43.2%	40.0%	57.6%	46.7%	56.6%	37.1%

Child Only Cases

The previous section highlighted similarities and differences among Maryland's 24 jurisdictions in the characteristics of their exiting cases considered as a whole. One of the main differences was the percentage of child only cases. We now turn to a discussion of the characteristics of this unique and important sub-population. Table 4, following, displays data for each jurisdiction's child only case closures. These findings are based on the universe of child only cases closing at least once between October 2003 and September 2004. However, while these are universe data (i.e. all cases), readers should note that for some jurisdictions this is a particularly small number of cases.

As shown in the second row of Table 4, the majority of child only cases in 23 jurisdictions are ones in which the adult payee is not the parent of the child or children receiving assistance. Among these 23 localities, the percentage of child only cases with a relative caregiver range from 52.9% in Talbot County to 88.2% in Kent County. Garrett County differs from the other local jurisdictions with two-thirds (66.7%) of its child only leavers headed by a parent who is receiving SSI. Other parental cases are fairly uncommon among exiting cases. However, about one-fifth of child only leavers in Howard (18.5%) and Talbot (20.6%) counties and almost one-quarter (24.4%) in Montgomery are parental cases where the case head is excluded from the grant for a reason other than SSI receipt. Further analyses indicated that these parents were most typically excluded from the cash grant due to their immigration status.

In our previous discussion of the statewide data, we noted that child only leavers differ from more traditional leavers on nearly all case and payee characteristics examined. Specifically, child only cases tend to have fewer children, are less likely to be headed by an African American payee, and receive assistance for a longer period before exiting. In addition, child only case heads are older and have older children than their counterparts in more traditional cases. Table 4 shows that these statewide trends generally hold true across Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions.

In fifteen jurisdictions, child only cases are open for an average of a year and a half to two years before closing. For the remaining localities, mean exit spell ranges widely from a little less than one year in Kent (mean = 11.40 months) to more than three and one-half years in Garrett (mean = 44.11 months). The variability in child only case subtypes likely explains at least some of the variability in the amount of time families receive TANF before leaving the rolls.

Across Maryland's 24 jurisdictions, the majority of payees heading child only cases are women, typically in their mid- to late forties. Child only case heads in Garrett and Queen Anne's counties are slightly younger, with average ages of 42.45 and 41.50 years, respectively.

The racial composition of the child only exiting caseload varies considerably across jurisdictions and is generally consistent with the local population. The percentage of African American payees ranges from none in Garrett County to 92.5% in Prince George's County.

Regardless of locality, the majority of child only cases include only one child in the assistance unit. In 16 jurisdictions, the youngest child in the assistance unit is between eight and nine years old. Child only cases in Garrett County have particularly young children, with an average age of about five years (mean = 4.91). In contrast, children in Calvert County's child only exiting caseload are typically about 11 years old.

Of course, data on the ages of children whose families are leaving welfare is particularly important as policy makers and program managers consider how best to allocate scarce child care resources. Child only cases present a unique challenge because they are not required to participate in work activities to receive TANF. However, many case heads, particularly relative caregivers, do work and may be in need of child care assistance. For example, a previous study showed that over two-fifths (42.5%) of all relative caregivers in the active caseload were employed in October 2003 (Hetling, et al., 2005). The last row of Table 4 indicates that, depending on the jurisdiction, one-tenth (Calvert County) to three-tenths (St. Mary's County) of child only cases include a child under the age of three. For these cases, child care assistance may be a particularly important post-exit support.

Table 4. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child Only Cases

	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore County	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
Number of Unique Closings	55	308	547	22	42	36
Type of Child Only Case						
Non-Parental	58.2%	79.9%	78.6%	63.6%	66.7%	63.9%
Parental – SSI	41.8%	16.9%	19.0%	36.4%	23.8%	30.6%
Parental – Other	0.0%	3.2%	2.4%	0.0%	9.5%	5.6%
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	54.5%	59.1%	52.5%	59.1%	50.0%	50.0%
13 - 24 months	12.7%	19.5%	23.9%	13.6%	21.4%	30.6%
25 - 36 months	20.0%	9.1%	8.6%	13.6%	9.5%	5.6%
37 - 48 months	7.3%	5.2%	4.9%	4.5%	4.8%	2.8%
49 - 60 months	1.8%	2.3%	3.3%	0.0%	4.8%	2.8%
More than 60 months	3.6%	4.9%	6.8%	9.1%	9.5%	8.3%
Mean [Median]	17.93 [11.27]	20.67 [11.50]	21.00 [11.73]	22.39 [10.91]	26.68 [13.05]	19.03 [12.62]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	1.31 [1.00]	1.59 [1.00]	1.41 [1.00]	1.59 [1.00]	1.55 [1.00]	1.56 [1.00]
Number of Children						
1	74.5%	63.0%	69.5%	59.1%	61.9%	61.1%
2	20.0%	22.4%	22.3%	31.8%	28.6%	22.2%
3 or more	5.5%	14.6%	8.2%	9.1%	9.5%	16.7%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	90.7%	39.4%	34.3%	47.6%	60.0%	76.5%
% African American	9.3%	55.1%	62.8%	52.4%	30.0%	20.6%
% Female	98.2%	93.5%	91.8%	77.3%	88.1%	88.9%
Mean Age [Median]	44.91 [43.57]	46.02 [45.52]	45.20 [45.48]	46.82 [46.54]	46.85 [46.80]	46.28 [44.49]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	9.03 [9.12]	8.62 [8.07]	8.82 [9.01]	11.12 [11.76]	9.35 [10.52]	8.04 [7.31]
% cases with a child under 3	23.5%	19.1%	19.2%	10.0%	15.8%	17.6%

Table 4. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child Only Cases (continued)

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford
Number of Unique Closings	66	105	65	75	9	121
Type of Child Only Case						
Non-Parental	68.2%	74.3%	78.5%	77.3%	33.3%	72.7%
Parental – SSI	27.3%	24.8%	15.4%	20.0%	66.7%	25.6%
Parental – Other	4.5%	1.0%	6.2%	2.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	51.5%	59.0%	44.6%	54.7%	44.4%	61.2%
13 - 24 months	19.7%	23.8%	26.2%	32.0%	11.1%	17.4%
25 - 36 months	4.5%	3.8%	6.2%	1.3%	0.0%	6.6%
37 - 48 months	4.5%	4.8%	7.7%	2.7%	11.1%	2.5%
49 - 60 months	4.5%	1.9%	3.1%	2.7%	0.0%	3.3%
More than 60 months	15.2%	6.7%	12.3%	6.7%	33.3%	9.1%
Mean [Median]	28.46 [11.99]	17.98 [10.81]	25.53 [17.42]	19.27 [11.57]	44.11 [17.88]	25.16 [11.14]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	1.44 [1.00]	1.57 [1.00]	1.71 [1.00]	1.47 [1.00]	1.56 [1.00]	1.64 [1.00]
Number of Children						
1	62.1%	57.1%	58.5%	70.7%	55.6%	59.5%
2	33.3%	31.4%	24.6%	17.3%	33.3%	24.8%
3 or more	4.5%	11.4%	16.9%	12.0%	11.1%	15.7%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	81.5%	26.7%	20.0%	40.8%	88.9%	47.5%
% African American	15.4%	72.3%	73.8%	56.3%	.0%	50.0%
% Female	93.9%	94.3%	95.4%	89.3%	88.9%	93.4%
Mean Age [Median]	45.25 [44.72]	47.62 [46.25]	45.27 [45.91]	47.72 [47.48]	42.45 [44.51]	45.42 [44.00]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	8.69 [8.76]	9.64 [10.90]	7.65 [7.98]	7.44 [6.43]	4.91 [3.55]	8.46 [7.69]
% cases with a child under 3	16.9%	13.3%	23.4%	23.6%	28.6%	18.8%

Table 4. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child Only Cases (continued)

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
Number of Unique Closings	54	17	217	681	18	64
Type of Child Only Case						
Non-Parental	55.6%	88.2%	53.9%	75.9%	61.1%	78.1%
Parental – SSI	25.9%	5.9%	21.7%	16.3%	33.3%	21.9%
Parental – Other	18.5%	5.9%	24.4%	7.8%	5.6%	0.0%
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	46.3%	70.6%	53.5%	41.0%	61.1%	60.9%
13 - 24 months	31.5%	17.6%	17.1%	24.8%	16.7%	17.2%
25 - 36 months	9.3%	5.9%	9.2%	12.3%	22.2%	6.3%
37 - 48 months	9.3%	.0%	5.1%	6.5%	0.0%	4.7%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	5.9%	5.5%	5.6%	0.0%	3.1%
More than 60 months	3.7%	.0%	9.7%	9.8%	0.0%	7.8%
Mean [Median]	20.49 [13.44]	11.40 [6.74]	25.58 [11.67]	28.11 [20.28]	12.94 [10.65]	24.11 [11.67]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	1.59 [1.00]	1.47 [1.00]	1.75 [1.00]	1.67 [1.00]	1.61 [1.00]	1.39 [1.00]
Number of Children						
1	59.3%	64.7%	53.9%	59.9%	61.1%	67.2%
2	29.6%	23.5%	27.2%	24.4%	22.2%	26.6%
3 or more	11.1%	11.8%	18.9%	15.7%	16.7%	6.3%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	28.3%	56.3%	10.2%	3.4%	66.7%	44.1%
% African American	66.0%	37.5%	66.8%	92.5%	27.8%	55.9%
% Female	96.3%	82.4%	93.5%	93.4%	77.8%	92.2%
Mean [Median]	43.76 [43.90]	49.45 [53.07]	44.63 [43.34]	47.61 [46.96]	41.50 [42.29]	46.14 [44.16]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	8.08 [8.15]	8.70 [7.98]	8.33 [8.20]	9.44 [9.77]	7.94 [9.19]	7.55 [6.71]
% cases with a child under 3	19.2%	23.5%	18.7%	14.2%	22.2%	29.0%

Table 4. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child Only Cases (continued)

	Somerset	Talbot	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City
Number of Unique Closings	24	34	98	106	32	2,123
Type of Child Only Case						
Non-Parental	79.2%	52.9%	86.7%	76.4%	68.8%	68.7%
Parental – SSI	20.8%	26.5%	11.2%	14.2%	31.3%	27.5%
Parental – Other	0.0%	20.6%	2.0%	9.4%	0.0%	3.9%
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	66.7%	55.9%	67.3%	54.7%	43.8%	51.2%
13 - 24 months	12.5%	11.8%	19.4%	24.5%	18.8%	24.8%
25 - 36 months	8.3%	14.7%	4.1%	10.4%	15.6%	10.7%
37 - 48 months	4.2%	5.9%	3.1%	1.9%	0.0%	4.2%
49 - 60 months	4.2%	2.9%	0.0%	0.9%	3.1%	2.6%
More than 60 months	4.2%	8.8%	6.1%	7.5%	18.8%	6.4%
Mean [Median]	21.50 [10.38]	23.66 [11.30]	17.30 [9.00]	21.03 [11.73]	28.08 [17.06]	23.09 [11.93]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	1.62 [1.00]	1.56 [1.00]	1.35 [1.00]	1.72 [1.00]	1.44 [1.00]	1.56 [1.00]
Number of Children						
1	58.3%	58.8%	77.6%	52.8%	62.5%	63.9%
2	25.0%	26.5%	15.3%	26.4%	31.3%	23.7%
3 or more	16.7%	14.7%	7.1%	20.8%	6.3%	12.4%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	41.7%	33.3%	74.5%	14.3%	41.4%	7.1%
% African American	58.3%	48.5%	24.5%	78.6%	58.6%	91.9%
% Female	95.8%	91.2%	86.7%	96.2%	96.9%	93.2%
Mean Age [Median]	47.22 [48.48]	45.41 [45.96]	46.24 [46.42]	48.56 [47.35]	48.50 [50.21]	47.09 [46.67]
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	7.16 [5.23]	7.89 [7.28]	6.99 [5.78]	8.23 [7.77]	8.66 [9.96]	9.27 [9.78]
% cases with a child under 3	17.4%	23.5%	28.0%	17.6%	16.7%	16.7%

Traditional Cases

Our final analysis of case characteristics focuses on “traditional” welfare cases with at least one adult receiving assistance in addition to the children. As can be seen in Table 5, following this discussion, the typical traditional case consists of one adult and one or two children. The percentages of cases that include two adults vary considerably from none in Worcester County to 16.9% in Garrett County.

Most families with traditional welfare cases exit the rolls quickly. In all 24 jurisdictions, the average welfare spell for these cases is less than one year. Notably, the average exit spell length is less than six months in five counties (Calvert, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot).

Across Maryland, nine out of ten traditional TANF cases are headed by women. The racial composition of cases ranges widely and generally corresponds to the composition of the local population. For example, the percentage of Caucasian payees heading traditional cases closing in the eighth year of reform varies from 3.6% in Prince George’s to 97.3% in Garrett.

In contrast to race, we find very little variability in the average age of exiting payees. Most adults in traditional welfare cases leaving welfare are in their early thirties. Across the 24 local jurisdictions, the average age of exiting case heads varies by only about four years, from a low of 28 years in Worcester County to a high of 32 ½ years in Montgomery County.

The final important finding presented in Table 5 concerns the age of the youngest child in traditional cases exiting TANF. In more than half of the jurisdictions, the youngest child is, on average, less than five years old. In addition, the percentage of traditional exiting cases with a child under the age of three is also significant, ranging from more than one-third in Kent County (36.7%) to almost three-fourths in Worcester County (72.4%). These results highlight the importance of the availability of child care assistance as a post-TANF support for those most affected by work requirements and time limits (i.e. traditional welfare cases).

Table 5. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases

	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore County	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
Number of Unique Closings	153	993	1,808	106	101	109
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	84.3%	88.4%	87.7%	92.5%	77.2%	87.2%
13 - 24 months	13.7%	9.7%	10.1%	4.7%	15.8%	10.1%
25 - 36 months	2.0%	1.5%	1.7%	2.8%	5.0%	2.8%
37 - 48 months	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Mean [Median]	6.46 [4.57]	7.01 [5.23]	6.45 [4.44]	5.18 [3.25]	9.40 [5.88]	6.08 [3.48]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.98 [3.00]	2.97 [3.00]	2.76 [2.00]	2.96 [3.00]	2.86 [3.00]	2.94 [3.00]
Number of Adults						
1	94.8%	94.6%	97.3%	92.3%	95.0%	95.4%
2	5.2%	5.4%	2.7%	7.7%	5.0%	4.6%
Number of Children						
0	2.6%	5.1%	4.2%	2.9%	1.0%	5.5%
1	43.1%	40.5%	46.9%	46.2%	46.5%	38.5%
2	26.8%	29.0%	30.3%	23.1%	28.7%	30.3%
3 or more	27.5%	25.5%	18.6%	27.9%	23.8%	25.7%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	88.6%	41.0%	30.6%	54.9%	50.5%	81.3%
% African American	10.7%	56.5%	67.0%	45.1%	49.5%	16.8%
% Female	89.5%	95.9%	96.1%	93.4%	97.0%	95.4%
Mean Age [Median]	29.22 [26.56]	30.39 [29.12]	30.28 [28.43]	31.89 [31.96]	31.32 [30.26]	31.21 [30.19]
Mean Age at First Birth [Median]	21.26 [20.15]	21.93 [20.60]	22.17 [20.45]	22.97 [21.46]	22.46 [20.50]	23.26 [21.36]
% who gave birth before 18	16.5%	20.3%	21.0%	10.2%	20.8%	10.8%
% who gave birth before 21	58.6%	53.8%	55.6%	40.8%	55.2%	47.1%
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	4.18 [1.81]	4.64 [2.87]	4.72 [2.65]	5.62 [3.83]	5.37 [3.07]	4.84 [2.77]
% cases with a child under 3	59.6%	51.4%	52.8%	47.6%	50.0%	50.9%

Table 5. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (continued)

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford
Number of Unique Closings	266	309	285	289	77	596
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	91.0%	85.4%	81.8%	89.6%	88.3%	83.2%
13 - 24 months	7.9%	12.0%	13.7%	8.0%	6.5%	12.9%
25 - 36 months	0.8%	1.9%	3.5%	1.4%	3.9%	2.9%
37 - 48 months	0.4%	0.0%	0.7%	1.0%	0.0%	0.5%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%
Mean [Median]	5.85 [3.81]	7.47 [4.96]	7.73 [5.03]	6.57 [4.34]	6.53 [3.81]	8.51 [6.44]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	3.03 [3.00]	2.90 [3.00]	2.79 [3.00]	2.88 [3.00]	2.81 [3.00]	2.95 [3.00]
Number of Adults						
1	88.7%	96.8%	95.4%	95.5%	83.1%	93.3%
2	11.3%	3.2%	4.6%	4.5%	16.9%	6.7%
Number of Children						
0	4.5%	2.6%	8.1%	3.1%	3.9%	3.5%
1	37.2%	45.0%	42.6%	46.7%	42.9%	41.1%
2	31.2%	30.4%	26.8%	27.0%	41.6%	30.9%
3 or more	27.1%	22.0%	22.5%	23.2%	11.7%	24.5%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	78.4%	32.7%	23.6%	56.1%	97.3%	46.2%
% African American	17.8%	65.3%	72.5%	39.6%	2.7%	49.1%
% Female	93.2%	98.1%	98.2%	96.2%	89.6%	95.8%
Mean Age [Median]	30.60 [29.29]	29.72 [27.71]	29.03 [26.80]	29.81 [27.66]	29.94 [27.24]	29.89 [27.82]
Mean Age at First Birth [Median]	21.96 [20.73]	21.58 [19.84]	21.00 [19.36]	22.72 [20.94]	22.67 [20.91]	21.80 [20.38]
% who gave birth before 18	16.1%	21.7%	29.1%	15.9%	14.5%	19.6%
% who gave birth before 21	54.2%	61.7%	63.2%	52.6%	50.7%	56.7%
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	5.24 [3.62]	4.68 [3.13]	4.96 [3.37]	4.11 [2.09]	4.51 [2.54]	4.69 [2.79]
% cases with a child under 3	45.5%	49.0%	46.6%	59.9%	57.3%	52.4%

Table 5. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (continued)

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
Number of Unique Closings	250	30	866	1,999	72	224
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	88.0%	93.3%	85.8%	72.2%	95.8%	79.9%
13 - 24 months	11.2%	6.7%	10.4%	20.5%	1.4%	14.7%
25 - 36 months	0.8%	0.0%	2.0%	4.8%	2.8%	3.6%
37 - 48 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.9%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.9%
Mean [Median]	6.13 [4.73]	4.91 [3.55]	7.89 [4.93]	11.09 [9.33]	4.55 [3.09]	10.27 [7.95]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.96 [3.00]	2.83 [3.00]	3.00 [3.00]	2.92 [3.00]	2.68 [2.00]	3.13 [3.00]
Number of Adults						
1	90.4%	96.7%	93.5%	96.6%	94.4%	91.9%
2	9.6%	3.3%	6.5%	3.4%	5.6%	8.1%
Number of Children						
0	1.6%	0.0%	3.4%	7.0%	5.6%	1.8%
1	43.2%	43.3%	40.7%	41.0%	48.6%	38.6%
2	31.2%	40.0%	29.8%	27.2%	30.6%	30.0%
3 or more	24.0%	16.7%	26.1%	24.8%	15.3%	29.6%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	25.4%	46.7%	14.3%	3.6%	51.4%	53.0%
% African American	69.2%	53.3%	75.6%	93.8%	44.4%	43.7%
% Female	96.8%	96.7%	94.6%	95.8%	95.8%	93.3%
Mean Age [Median]	31.07 [29.87]	31.44 [29.90]	32.56 [31.22]	31.04 [29.53]	31.14 [29.46]	31.13 [31.12]
Mean Age at First Birth [Median]	22.91 [20.50]	22.70 [20.02]	23.47 [21.82]	22.23 [20.39]	22.81 [21.69]	21.70 [20.33]
% who gave birth before 18	17.0%	13.8%	13.7%	20.8%	18.5%	19.6%
% who gave birth before 21	53.2%	62.1%	44.5%	55.3%	46.2%	55.9%
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	4.74 [3.11]	5.96 [4.34]	5.10 [3.23]	5.09 [3.26]	5.03 [3.37]	5.32 [3.57]
% cases with a child under 3	48.6%	36.7%	48.8%	47.3%	43.3%	46.2%

Table 5. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (continued)

	Somerset	Talbot	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City
Number of Unique Closings	90	65	240	343	78	10,589
Length of Exiting Spell						
12 months or less	80.0%	90.8%	86.7%	86.3%	85.9%	81.4%
13 - 24 months	17.8%	9.2%	11.7%	11.7%	12.8%	14.9%
25 - 36 months	1.1%	0.0%	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%	2.6%
37 - 48 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%
49 - 60 months	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Mean [Median]	7.80 [5.36]	5.25 [4.24]	6.71 [4.86]	7.75 [6.51]	7.24 [5.46]	9.21 [7.79]
Mean Size of Assistance Unit [Median]	2.74 [2.00]	2.60 [2.00]	2.85 [3.00]	3.04 [3.00]	3.00 [3.00]	2.87 [3.00]
Number of Adults						
1	92.2%	95.4%	96.7%	94.5%	100.0%	97.4%
2	7.8%	4.6%	3.3%	5.5%	.0%	2.6%
Number of Children						
0	2.2%	6.2%	3.3%	5.0%	5.1%	4.5%
1	51.1%	49.2%	44.6%	35.3%	41.0%	43.7%
2	28.9%	32.3%	31.7%	31.8%	20.5%	28.6%
3 or more	17.8%	12.3%	20.4%	28.0%	33.3%	23.1%
Payee Characteristics						
% Caucasian	43.3%	42.9%	70.8%	25.3%	33.3%	5.8%
% African American	56.7%	54.0%	27.5%	72.6%	66.7%	93.4%
% Female	93.3%	95.4%	97.5%	97.1%	96.2%	96.1%
Mean Age [Median]	29.86 [26.57]	30.03 [29.76]	28.64 [26.46]	29.00 [26.68]	28.19 [26.22]	30.44 [28.25]
Mean Age at First Birth [Median]	22.43 [20.35]	21.70 [20.69]	21.98 [20.69]	21.16 [19.97]	21.03 [20.28]	21.12 [19.43]
% who gave birth before 18	22.2%	21.1%	15.9%	21.3%	21.9%	31.8%
% who gave birth before 21	58.0%	56.1%	56.2%	61.5%	68.5%	64.0%
Age of Youngest Child in AU						
Mean [Median]	5.10 [3.76]	5.14 [3.01]	3.28 [1.14]	4.26 [2.42]	3.23 [1.17]	5.48 [3.87]
% cases with a child under 3	50.0%	49.2%	69.4%	55.8%	72.4%	41.0%

Administrative Case Closure Codes

Statewide: All Cases

In addition to case characteristics, another important aspect of the *Caseload Exits* series is examination of the most commonly recorded administrative closing codes. When closing a welfare case, caseworkers must choose from a set of pre-determined codes. These codes do not always capture the full range or complexity of reasons why families leave welfare. As our research has repeatedly demonstrated, the administratively-recorded closing codes significantly understate the true rate of work-related welfare exits.³ Despite these important limitations, administrative case closing reasons provide the only readily available measure of full family sanctioning. Moreover, prior research has shown that administrative case closing reasons are correlated with important post-exit outcomes such as employment and recidivism (Ovwigbo, Tracy, & Born, 2004).

Figure 3, following this discussion, displays statewide data on the three most commonly recorded administrative closing codes for all leavers, child only leavers, and traditional leavers. For all cases, the top three closure codes are the same in the eighth year of reform as in previous years: “No Recertification/No Redetermination” (22.3%); “Income Above Limit (including Started Work)” (22.0%); and “Work Sanction” (19.5%). Although the top two codes have been consistent over the course of reform, it is important to note that the percentage of cases closed with the code “No Recertification/No Redetermination” has declined and the percentage closed because of “Income Above Limit” has increased. The result is that in year eight the two codes account for virtually the same proportion of cases, a little less than one in four closures.

One-fifth (19.5%) of all cases exiting between October 2003 and September 2004 closed because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work activities, the third most common administrative closure code. This represents an increase over the sanctioning rates observed in the early years of reform. However, the percentage of cases closed because of a work sanction is the same in year eight as it was in year seven, indicating perhaps a leveling off in sanctioning rates.

Statewide: Child Only and Traditional Cases

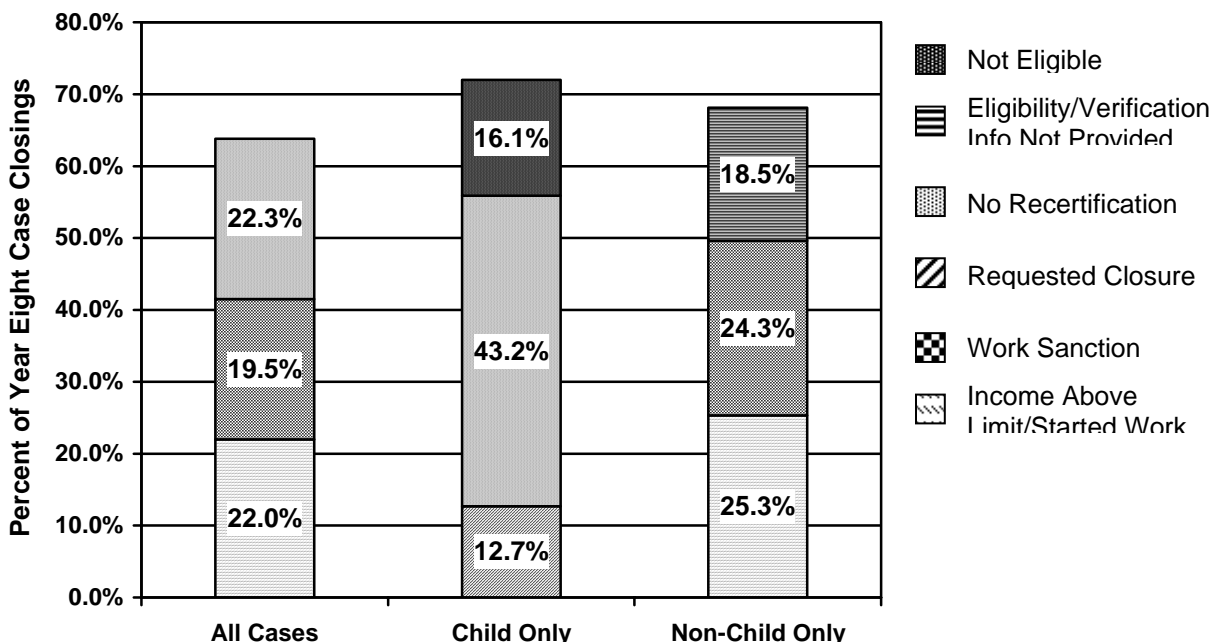
Figure 3 also shows that case closure codes differ significantly between child only cases and traditional cases. Among child only cases, more than two-fifths (43.2%) closed with the code “No Recertification/No Redetermination”. An additional 16.1% closed because they were no longer eligible, and 12.7% exited because they requested case closure. In total, these three reasons account for almost three-fourths (72.0%) of child only case closures. These findings suggest that child only cases exit welfare primarily because their circumstances have changed in some way so that they no longer qualify or feel they no longer need assistance. Given that most child only cases

³ One analysis, to illustrate, compared UI wage data with TCA case closing reasons and found that the true rate of employment among exiters was at least 25% higher than was reflected in the administrative case closing codes.

are headed by a non-parental caregiver, it is possible that the TANF case closure occurs when the child or children return to their parent’s household.

Among traditional cases, the role of work in leaving welfare is evident. One-fourth of traditional cases (25.3%) closed with the code “Income Above Limit”. An additional one-fourth (24.3%) left the rolls because of a full family sanction for not complying with work activity requirements. The third most common closing reason, “Eligibility Verification Not Provided”, accounted for 18.5% of traditional case closures.

Figure 4. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons: Statewide***



*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Jurisdictional Analysis

Earlier in this report we described differences among Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions in the characteristics of their exiting caseloads. Table 6, following this discussion, also addresses the question of local variability in terms of administrative closure codes. The table reveals both similarities and differences across jurisdictions. In most localities, at least two of the three most common statewide closing codes top the jurisdiction’s list.

The good news is that “Income Above Limit (including Started Work)” is the most common closing code in 19 of the 24 jurisdictions, accounting for just under one in four (23.1%) of Allegany County closures to more than two-fifths (45.3%) of Calvert County closures. In one of the remaining jurisdictions (Dorchester County), “Work Sanction” is the most common administrative closure code, occurring among about one-fourth (26.9%) of cases. Codes related to eligibility procedures topped the list of most common closure codes in the remaining four jurisdictions: “Eligibility/verification information not provided” in Anne Arundel County (23.1%); and “No recertification/no

redetermination” in Charles (30.2%) and Prince George’s (29.3%) Counties and Baltimore City (25.5%).

At the jurisdictional level, differences in the reasons why child only and traditional cases close are also evident. Jurisdictions also vary quite a bit in why their child only cases close. “No recertification/no redetermination” is the most common closing code for child only cases in 13 of the 24 subdivisions, accounting for one-quarter (25.9%, Howard County) to one-half (54.8%, Prince George’s County) of closures. “Income above limit” tops the list of closure codes for child only cases in four jurisdictions. Among these jurisdictions, the percentage of child only cases leaving the rolls because their income is too high ranges from 25.0% (Worcester County) to 35.3% (Kent County). The remaining seven jurisdictions vary in terms of their top closing code for child only cases.

For traditional cases, “Income above limit” is the most common closing reason, topping the list in 20 out of 24 jurisdictions and accounting for one-quarter (23.2%, Prince George’s County) to one-half (49.1%, Calvert County) of closures. Work sanctions are the most common closure code in three jurisdictions (Allegany and Dorchester Counties, and Baltimore City). Anne Arundel County is unique among jurisdictions with “Eligibility/verification information not provided” as the most commonly-recorded case closing code for its traditional welfare cases; almost two-fifths (37.1%) of traditional cases close for this reason.

Table 6. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons by Type and Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	All Cases	Child Only	Traditional
Allegany	Income above limit 23.1% Work sanction 22.1% Worker voided application 19.7%	Worker voided application 38.2% Income above limit 25.5% Not eligible 10.9%	Work sanction 30.1% Income above limit 22.2% Requested closure 14.4%
Anne Arundel	Eligibility/verification info not provided 29.7% No recertification/no redetermination 19.9% Income above limit 17.0%	No recertification/no redetermination 40.3% Not eligible 15.9% Requested closure 12.7%	Eligibility/verification info not provided 37.1% Income above limit 19.3% No recertification/no redetermination 13.6%
Baltimore County	Income above limit 26.6% Work sanction 21.7% No recertification/no redetermination 17.1%	No recertification/no redetermination 35.1% Requested closure 19.0% Not eligible 15.0%	Income above limit 31.4% Work sanction 28.3% Eligibility/verification info not provided 13.5%
Calvert	Income above limit 45.3% Work sanction 11.7% Not eligible 11.7%	Income above limit 27.3% No recertification/no redetermination 27.3% Not eligible 27.3%	Income above limit 49.1% Work sanction 14.2% Eligibility/verification info not provided 10.4%
Caroline	Income above limit 35.7% Work sanction 19.6% Not eligible 10.5%	Not eligible 28.6% Income above limit 26.2% Requested closure 14.3%	Income above limit 39.6% Work sanction 27.7% No recertification/no redetermination 7.9%
Carroll	Income above limit 40.7% Eligibility/verification info not provided 15.2% Requested closure 13.1%	Requested Closure 30.6% Income above limit 25.0% Not Eligible 19.4%	Income above limit 45.9% Eligibility/verification info not provided 19.3% Work Sanction 9.2%
Cecil	Income above limit 30.7% Work sanction 20.8% Eligibility/verification info not provided 14.2%	No recertification/no redetermination 28.8% Not eligible 24.2% Requested closure 19.7%	Income above limit 35.0% Work sanction 25.9% Eligibility/verification info not provided 15.8%
Charles	No recertification/no redetermination 30.2% Income above limit 26.1% Work sanction 16.7%	No recertification/no redetermination 50.5% Not eligible 20.0% Requested closure 13.3%	Income above limit 32.4% No recertification/no redetermination 23.3% Work sanction 22.3%
Dorchester	Work sanction 26.9% Income above limit 22.9% No recertification/no redetermination 17.4%	No recertification/no redetermination 33.8% Income above limit 18.5% Requested closure 16.9%	Work sanction 33.0% Income above limit 23.9% No recertification/no redetermination 13.7%
Frederick	Income above limit 36.5% Work sanction 14.8% No recertification/no redetermination 10.7%	Not eligible 36.0% No recertification/no redetermination 25.3% Requested closure 13.3%	Income above limit 42.9% Work sanction 18.7% Eligibility/verification info not provided 11.8%
Garrett	Income above limit 31.4% Requested closure 17.4% Work sanction 16.3%	Residency 22.2% Requested closure 22.2% Not eligible 11.1%	Income above limit 35.1% Work sanction 18.2% Requested closure 16.9%
Harford	Income above limit 33.5% No recertification/no redetermination 18.1% Eligibility/verification info not provided 16.0%	No recertification/no redetermination 38.8% Requested closure 24.0% Not eligible 11.6%	Income above limit 38.4% Eligibility/verification info not provided 17.8% Work sanction 15.4%
Howard	Income above limit 34.2% Work sanction 22.4% Eligibility/verification info not provided 14.5%	No recertification/no redetermination 25.9% Not eligible 22.2% Eligibility/verification info not provided 16.7%	Income above limit 39.6% Work sanction 27.2% Eligibility/verification info not provided 14.0%

Jurisdiction	All Cases	Child Only	Traditional
Kent	Income above limit 36.2% Work sanction 21.3% Requested closure 10.6%	Income above limit 35.3% Not eligible 23.5% Requested closure 17.6%	Income above limit 36.7% Work sanction 33.3% Eligibility/verification info not provided 6.7%
Montgomery	Income above limit 31.4% Work sanction 22.6% No recertification/no redetermination 16.2%	No recertification/no redetermination 46.1% Not eligible 12.9% Eligibility/verification info not provided 11.1%	Income above limit 36.6% Work sanction 28.3% Eligibility/verification info not provided 15.1%
Prince George's	No recertification/no redetermination 29.3% Income above limit 18.7% Eligibility/verification info not provided 18.0%	No recertification/no redetermination 54.8% Not eligible 12.2% Requested closure 10.4%	Income above limit 23.2% Eligibility/verification info not provided 22.4% No recertification/no redetermination 20.6%
Queen Anne's	Income above limit 34.4% Eligibility/verification info not provided 22.2% Work sanction 15.6%	Income above limit 33.3% Requested closure 27.8% Not eligible 16.7%	Income above limit 34.7% Eligibility/verification info not provided 26.4% Work sanction 19.4%
St. Mary's	Income above limit 33.0% No recertification/no redetermination 24.7% Eligibility/verification info not provided 12.5%	No recertification/no redetermination 37.5% Income above limit 15.6% Requested closure 15.6%	Income above limit 37.9% No recertification/no redetermination 21.0% Eligibility/verification info not provided 15.2%
Somerset	Income above limit 33.3% Work sanction 25.4% Requested closure 11.4%	Worker voided application 25.0% Not eligible 20.8% Requested Closure 20.8%	Income above limit 40.0% Work sanction 32.2% Requested closure 8.9%
Talbot	Income above limit 28.3% Work sanction 17.2% No recertification/no redetermination 17.2%	No recertification/no redetermination 35.3% Requested closure 20.6% Eligibility/verification info not provided 11.8%	Income above limit 38.5% Work sanction 26.2% No recertification/no redetermination 7.7%
Washington	Income above limit 28.7% Eligibility/verification info not provided 14.2% No recertification/no redetermination 13.0%	Not eligible 29.6% Requested closure 19.4% Income above limit 17.3%	Income above limit 33.3% Eligibility/verification info not provided 16.7% Work sanction 15.4%
Wicomico	Income above limit 30.1% No recertification/no redetermination 17.4% Eligibility/verification info not provided 13.6%	No recertification/no redetermination 26.4% Requested closure 20.8% Not eligible 18.9%	Income above limit 35.3% Eligibility/verification info not provided 15.7% No recertification/no redetermination 14.6%
Worcester	Income above limit 32.7% Work sanction 20.9% Eligibility/verification info not provided 17.3%	Income above limit 25.0% Requested closure 15.6% Not eligible 15.6%	Income above limit 35.9% Work sanction 29.5% Eligibility/verification info not provided 17.9%
Baltimore City	No recertification/no redetermination 25.5% Work sanction 23.2% Income above limit 18.0%	No recertification/no redetermination 50.0% Not eligible 16.2% Requested closure 9.8%	Work sanction 27.8% No recertification/no redetermination 20.6% Income above limit 20.6%

Full Family Sanctions: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

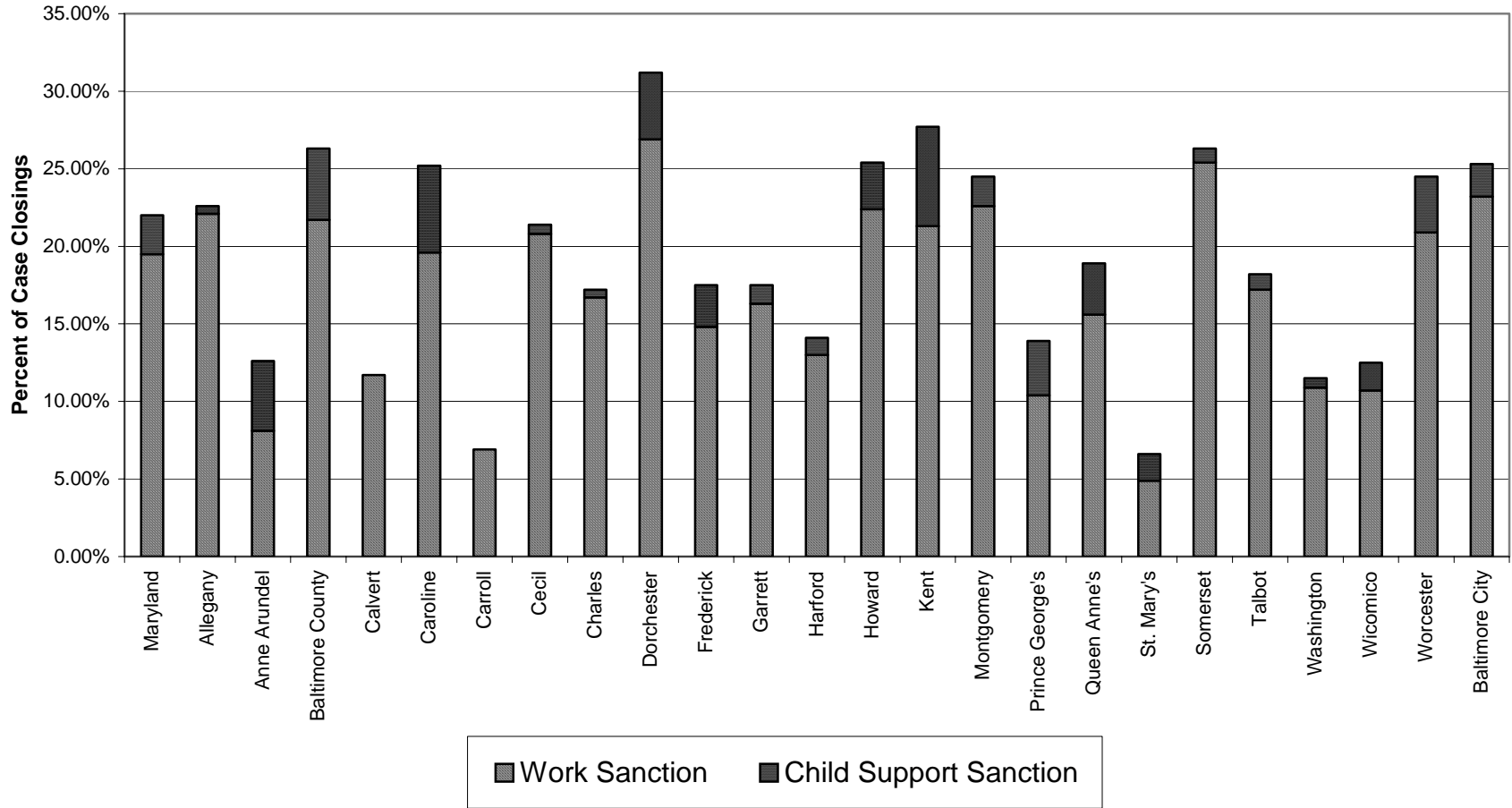
The imposition of full family sanctions for non-cooperation with work or child support requirements remains an area of particular concern for policy makers and program managers. In previous reports, we have noted an increase over time in cases closed because of a work sanction. Figure 5, on the following page, graphically displays data on the rate of sanctioning among cases closing between October 2003 and September 2004. Appendix B contains the detailed data table.

In general, we find that sanctioning rates have changed very little between year seven and year eight. Statewide, full family sanctions account for almost one-quarter (22.0%) of case closures. One-fifth of year eight cases (19.5%) closed because of a work sanction and 2.5% closed because of a child support sanction. These rates are almost identical to those found among year seven closings. Among cases closing between October 2002 and September 200, to illustrate, 19.6% were sanctioned for non-compliance with work requirements and 2.6% were closed because of non-cooperation with child support enforcement. The fact that the rate of full family sanctioning for work requirements did not increase, even after the full implementation of Maryland's universal engagement policy, is encouraging and suggests that local departments have been successful in engaging customers in activities without resorting to the use of sanctions.

Across Maryland's 24 local subdivisions, work sanctions continue to exceed child support sanctions by a wide margin. There also continues to be great variation across counties in the rate of closures due to work sanctions. As shown in Figure 5, the percentage of cases closed because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work activities ranged widely from a low of 4.9% in St. Mary's County to a high of 26.9% in Dorchester County. Work sanctions accounted for one-fifth to one-fourth of all closures in ten jurisdictions.

In contrast, very few cases close because of a sanction for non-cooperation with child support enforcement. The highest rate of child support sanctions was found in Caroline County. Although the rate was 5.6%, readers should note this represents only eight cases closing for this reason.

Figure 5. Full Family Sanctions



CONCLUSIONS

In sum, our analysis of TANF case closings occurring during the eighth year of welfare reform in Maryland generally reveals that most of the trends observed in earlier years still hold true. The total number of cases closing each year continues to decline. Single parents, typically mothers with one or two children, still comprise the majority of TANF leavers. Most families exit the rolls after fairly short periods of welfare receipt and for reasons other than sanctioning.

Within these now familiar data, there are also some new findings that may be of use to policy makers and program managers. The first of these findings is that in the most recent year, the gap between caseload and closing shares widened in Baltimore City. Since the beginning of welfare reform, we have compared the proportion of case closings to each jurisdiction's share of the active statewide caseload. Throughout this period, Baltimore City has closed fewer cases than its caseload share, while the 23 counties have generally closed more or about the same number of cases as expected. The gap between closings and caseload in the City declined from a high of -17.1% in the first year of reform to a low of -0.1% in the sixth year. The gap began to widen again in the seventh year and reached -3.3% in the eighth year. For policy-makers and program managers it is important to note that, if the current trend continues, Maryland's TANF caseload may become even more concentrated in the City.

The concentration of the state's welfare caseload in its largest city has important implications for the state as a whole, particularly in terms of increased work participation requirements that will likely result from the eventual reauthorization of TANF. Earlier studies have demonstrated that the implementation of new policies and practices generally takes longer in major urban areas (see, for example, Ovwigho, Saunders, Kolupanowich, & Born, 2005). Because Baltimore City has the largest caseload, trends in the City strongly influence statewide results and the reality of case closing trends should be kept in mind as strategies to meet new performance measures and goals are adopted.

The second set of new findings included in this project report concern the prevalence and characteristics of child only cases in the exiting caseload. Statewide child only cases account for one-fifth of case closures. In nine jurisdictions, one-fourth or more of all TCA closures occur among child only cases. While these proportions represent a significant increase over those observed in the early years of reform, it is important to note that they are only about half of the corresponding proportions in the active TANF caseload. In other words, child only cases are twice as common among the active welfare caseload as they are among welfare exiters. We also find that, although non-parents head the majority of child only cases exiting TCA, they are slightly underrepresented compared to their proportions among the active caseload.

The prevalence of child only cases in the exiting caseload is noteworthy because earlier research has documented significant differences between child only cases and traditional cases in terms of their characteristics, employment, and welfare receipt patterns (Hetling, et al., 2005b). Data presented here documents similar differences among child only and traditional leavers. In particular, we find that former child only

payees are older, have children who are older, are exiting from a much longer welfare spell, and are less likely to leave for work-related reasons than traditional payees.

There are several important implications of these findings. First, because child only cases now comprise a sizable minority of welfare leavers and have some unique characteristics, agencies may need to evaluate if there is a need for special transitional or post-exit services for this population. For example, with few child only cases closing for work-related reasons and thus qualifying for transitional medical assistance, health insurance may be a particular concern among child only leavers.

A second important implication of these findings is that the trend of increasing proportions of child only cases, particularly those headed by non-parents, among the active TANF caseload is likely to continue. Child only cases present a unique challenge in today's welfare environment. In the early years of reform, the fact that child only cases are exempt from time limits and work requirements resulted in their being largely ignored in public discourse and welfare-related research. As traditional cases left the rolls and child only cases became a larger share of the caseload, more attention focused on these types of cases. Today most program managers and policymakers realize that this special population may have service needs beyond a monthly check. Amid the discussions of increasing work requirements and participation rates, the challenge remains to craft a program that will best serve all children in need, regardless of the administrative case type their family happens to be.

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APPENDIX A. PERCENTS OF CLOSINGS AND AVERAGE CASELOAD

Jurisdiction	Percent of Total Closings	Percent of Average Caseload	Difference
Baltimore County	9.5% (2,355)	8.5% (2,413)	1.0
Montgomery	4.4% (1,083)	3.5% (983)	0.9
Anne Arundel	5.2% (1,301)	4.7% (1,327)	0.5
Cecil	1.3% (332)	1.0% (292)	0.3
Charles	1.7% (414)	1.4% (410)	0.3
Dorchester	1.4% (350)	1.1% (320)	0.3
Washington	1.4% (338)	1.1% (308)	0.3
Frederick	1.5% (364)	1.3% (356)	0.2
Harford	2.9% (717)	2.7% (772)	0.2
Caroline	0.6% (143)	0.5% (129)	0.1
Garrett	0.3% (86)	0.3% (75)	0.1
Howard	1.2% (304)	1.1% (299)	0.1
Queen Anne's	0.4% (90)	0.3% (77)	0.1
Talbot	0.4% (99)	0.3% (97)	0.1
Allegany	0.8% (208)	0.8% (229)	0.0
Calvert	0.5% (128)	0.5% (134)	0.0
Carroll	0.6% (145)	0.6% (170)	0.0
Kent	0.2% (47)	0.2% (52)	0.0
St. Mary's	1.2% (288)	1.2% (331)	0.0
Somerset	0.5% (114)	0.5% (129)	0.0
Worcester	0.4% (110)	0.4% (114)	0.0
Wicomico	1.8% (449)	1.9% (543)	-0.1
Prince George's	10.8% (2,680)	12.0% (3,394)	-1.2
Baltimore City	51.1% (12,712)	54.4% (15,442)	-3.3
Statewide Total	100% (24,857)	100% (28,387)	--

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 2003 - September 2004.

APPENDIX B. FULL FAMILY SANCTIONS: 10/03 – 9/04

Jurisdiction	Work Sanction	Child Support Sanction
Maryland	19.5 % (4,844)	2.5% (627)
Allegany	22.1% (46)	0.5% (1)
Anne Arundel	8.1% (106)	4.5% (59)
Baltimore County	21.7% (512)	4.6% (109)
Calvert	11.7% (15)	0.0% (0)
Caroline	19.6% (28)	5.6% (8)
Carroll	6.9 % (10)	0.0% (0)
Cecil	20.8% (69)	0.6% (2)
Charles	16.7% (69)	0.5% (2)
Dorchester	26.9% (94)	4.3% (15)
Frederick	14.8 % (54)	2.7% (10)
Garrett	16.3% (14)	1.2% (1)
Harford	13.0% (93)	1.1% (8)
Howard	22.4% (68)	3.0% (9)
Kent	21.3% (10)	6.4% (3)
Montgomery	22.6 % (245)	1.9% (21)
Prince George's	10.4% (278)	3.5% (94)
Queen Anne's	15.6% (14)	3.3% (3)
St. Mary's	4.9% (14)	1.7% (5)
Somerset	25.4 % (29)	0.9% (1)
Talbot	17.2% (17)	1.0% (1)
Washington	10.9% (37)	0.6% (2)
Wicomico	10.7% (48)	1.8% (8)
Worcester	20.9% (23)	3.6% (4)
Baltimore City	23.2% (2,951)	2.1% (261)