

# CASELOAD EXITS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: THE NINTH YEAR OF FIP

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maryland has long used empirical data to inform cash assistance policies and programs and to measure and monitor their outcomes at the micro and macro levels. As a result, the welfare program developed in response to the landmark Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) was based on empirical data about the characteristics and circumstances of cash assistance clients, their geographical distribution across Maryland's 24 jurisdictions, and their patterns of welfare use over time. Consistent with this data-driven orientation, Maryland also has a comprehensive, ongoing research program which monitors welfare reform outcomes, makes study results publicly available, and uses those results to inform front-line staff training, program enhancements, and legislative oversight. Studies range from point-in-time examinations of single topics such as domestic violence or time limits, to those which are serial in nature. One of the research study series, *Caseload Exits at the Local Level*, has been ongoing since the outset of reform in October, 1996 and focuses on case closures at the local level. Because Maryland is such a diverse state, the *Caseload Exit* reports provide invaluable, jurisdiction-level, comparative information about the numbers and characteristics of closing cases and the reasons for case closure.

This report in the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* series provides information on 24,277 unduplicated case closures that occurred between October, 2004 and September, 2005. This was the ninth full year of welfare reform in Maryland and the last full year of program operation under the "old" welfare reform rules, i.e., the last year before the more restrictive, controversial work provisions of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) began to be implemented. Because of the potentially significant and potentially adverse effects of DRA requirements on states and localities, we thought it

important that information about closures immediately before DRA, during initial DRA implementation, and during the first full DRA year be easily available for comparison. Thus, we present this report with two companion documents, separate reports covering the first year of partial DRA implementation (October, 2005 through September, 2006) and the first full year of operation under the new DRA rules (October, 2006 through September, 2007). Key findings from this report are highlighted below.

1. The number of unique cases closing between October 2004 and September 2005 (24,277) was only slightly smaller (by 850 cases) than the year before but, continuing the downward trend in closures, was the lowest number observed since 1996.
2. Consistent with the composition of the overall cash assistance caseload, the large majority of closures (80%) were traditional cases, while one-fifth (20%) were child only cases. Similarly, the three jurisdictions with the largest caseloads (Baltimore City, Prince George's and Baltimore Counties) accounted for the lion's share (71.8%) of closures. In Baltimore City and Wicomico Counties, their shares of overall statewide closures were less than their shares of the overall average annual active caseload, by -2.3% and -1.5%, respectively.
3. Reflecting the predominance of traditional cases, statewide, the typical exiting case contained one adult (76.9%) and one child (47.3%), was headed by an African-American (79.6%) female (95.3%) averaging 35 years of age, who had her first child before the age of 21 (58.8%) and had been on welfare for 12 or fewer consecutive months at the time of exit (75%). Two in five cases (40.7%) contained a child under three.
4. Certain observed differences between traditional (generally work-mandatory) and child-only cases are both statistical-

ly and programmatically significant. Traditional cases are more likely to have at least one child under three years of age (46.5% vs. 16.9%), have more than one child (53.0% vs. 35.9%), have a younger payee (average 30.6 years vs. 46.7), larger assistance unit size, on average (2.9 persons vs. 1.5) and to have had a much shorter welfare spell leading up to closure (8.7 months on average vs. 24.8 months).

5. With regard to traditional cases (the majority of exits and the foci of welfare-to-work and DRA requirements), there is general similarity across jurisdictions with regard to the length of time families had been on welfare continuously before exiting. There was little variation in the percent of cases with short welfare spells, but three jurisdictions (Prince George's and St. Mary's counties and Baltimore City had average spells (11.2 months, 11.6 months and 9.4 months) greater than the statewide average (8.7 months).
6. On most demographic variables, jurisdictional findings mirrored those for the state, with a few outliers. One-adult assistance cases predominated everywhere and in all but four counties, (Caroline, Cecil, Queen Anne's and Washington), one-child units were most common. Notably, in 11 of 24 subdivisions, cases with three or more children accounted for one in four or more of all cases that closed. Most were smaller locales, but Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties are also in this group.
7. For the statewide sample as a whole, the top three closing codes were: work sanction (23.0%); income above limit (21.5%); and no recertification/redetermination (21.3%), accounting for about two-thirds of all closures during the year. As expected, the top three codes were quite different for traditional cases and child-only cases. For the former, the most common codes

were: work sanction (28.7%); income above limit (24.9%); and lack of eligibility/verification information (17.7%). In child-only closures, the common reasons were: no recertification (43.4%); not eligible (16.6%); and requested closure (11.5%).

8. At the local level, we find considerable variation in the frequency with which the different closing codes were used, but also some commonalities. In 17 of 24 subdivisions, cases were most commonly closed because their income was above the eligibility limit. The "statewide" most common reason (work sanction) results from the fact that in the four jurisdictions with the largest numbers of closing cases (Baltimore City and Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince George's County), the code most commonly used to close traditional cases was 'work sanction'. About one in four traditional cases in Prince George's County this year closed because of a work sanction, as did about one in three cases in the other three jurisdictions.
9. About one case in four, statewide, regardless of case type, was closed because of a full family sanction. As has been true since the outset of reform, most (89.8%) are work sanctions, and subdivisions vary widely in the types and rates of sanctioning. In the four large jurisdictions noted above (and in Dorchester County), one in four or more of cases were sanctioned, whereas in other counties (Calvert, Carroll and St. Mary's) the rate is roughly one in 10. Also worth noting is that in Wicomico County the percentage of work sanctioning closures nearly doubled from the prior year, to 20.8% whereas in Worcester County the work sanctioning rate was nearly halved, to 9.8%

This year's findings are very consistent with those documented in prior years' *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* reports and the trends (e.g., fewer cases closing each year,

more cases closing because of sanctioning) are generally unchanged as well. The fact that statewide statistics often mask important, sub-state differences is also a point made clear in this report as it has been in almost all of our research studies.

As noted, the entire time period covered by this particular report was one in which the “old” PRWORA work participation rules were in effect. We would thus not expect to see any effect of these looming changes on study findings and we did not. However, the fact that full family sanctioning, particularly

work-related sanctioning, continues to increase, year-over-year, particularly in metropolitan jurisdictions with large caseloads, could well foreshadow difficulties as the more inclusive and stringent DRA rules are put into place. The two companion *Caseload Exits* reports should let us know, at the statewide and local level, if and how the DRA changes, at the outset, may be associated with changes in the characteristics of exiting payees and cases, case closing patterns and reasons, and work sanctioning.



## INTRODUCTION

Throughout our decades-long partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR), the Family Welfare Research and Training Group at the University of Maryland School of Social Work has produced numerous reports on the State's welfare caseload trends and outcomes. Some reports focus on a particular client group (e.g. victims of domestic violence) or a particular point in time. Other projects are serial in nature. These allow policy makers and program administrators to understand how client and caseload characteristics and outcomes change over time and adjust program parameters to reflect current realities.

The first series, *Life after Welfare*, features findings on the short- and long-term outcomes of welfare leavers at both the case and individual levels. The second series, *Life on Welfare*, describes the characteristics and circumstances of current TCA customers and compares them to earlier cohorts. While these two series include samples of current and past TCA customers in Maryland, the third series, *Caseload Exits at the Local Level*, uses the entire universe of welfare leavers and is the only report primarily focused on jurisdictional comparisons of the characteristics of welfare leavers. This series is important, of course, because while Maryland is a small state in size, it is economically and culturally diverse.

Continuing the series legacy, which to date consists of eight annual and two multi-year reports, today's report examines all Maryland cases that exited welfare during the

ninth year (October 2004 through September 2005) after passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, or "welfare reform." Our focus is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the welfare case closing trends in the ninth year of welfare reform (statewide and jurisdictional)?
2. What are the differences between a jurisdiction's share of closings and its share of the overall caseload?
3. What are the characteristics of closing cases and payees (statewide and jurisdictional)?
4. What are the most frequently recorded case closure reasons (statewide and jurisdictional)?
5. How do child-only cases differ from traditional cases in terms of their exit patterns?

The current study contains information on 24,277 cases that closed at least once during the study period. Because child-only cases differ from more traditional one and two-adult cases in important ways, this report continues to separate child-only cases from non-child-only cases. With few published studies available on the exit patterns of child-only cases, including this information in our reports is a valuable contribution to the research field and to front-line service planning and provision.

## METHODS

### Sample

Today's study includes every TANF cash assistance case that was closed at least once in Maryland between October 2004 and September 2005. A case closure refers to an assistance unit which stopped receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) for at least one month during the 12-month study period. All cases or families are included in the sample only once, even if they experienced multiple closings during the study period. By randomly choosing one closing record per case, we ensure no systematic effect of duplicates on the number of closings by month. It should be noted that the total number of closures reported here may be slightly different from the total number of closures reported by the Family Investment Administration for the same period; this is due in large part to our counting each case only once during the 12 month study period.

Of the total case closures ( $n=24,277$ ), we distinguish child-only cases ( $n=4,919$ ) from traditional cases ( $n=19,358$ ). Because child-only cases have unique characteristics (e.g. longer welfare histories) and different patterns (e.g. exempt from work participation requirements), it is appropriate to consider them separately. In addition, the increased percentage of child-only cases in the active caseload (Hetling, Saunders, & Born 2005) motivates policy makers and program managers to pay more attention to this type of case.

Child-only cases have at least one participating child, but do not contain any participating adults in the assistance unit. Child-only cases may be: 1) children living with an adult other than their parent (i.e. a relative) who is not in need of cash assistance (i.e. non-parental child-only cases); or 2) children living with a parent who is not on the grant because of SSI receipt, sanction, or ineligibility caused by the adult's immigration status (i.e. parental child-only cases) (Hetling, et al., 2005).

### Data Sources

The data used for this report comes from monthly case closing files extracted from the Client Automated Resources and Eligibility System (CARES). CARES is the official statewide automated data system for the Family Investment Administration, Department of Human Resources and contains all customer participation data for Temporary Cash Assistance, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance, and social services programs.

### Analyses

Throughout this report, descriptive analyses are used to provide an overall picture of our study sample. For some variables, when appropriate, Chi-square and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized.

## FINDINGS: OVERVIEW OF CASE CLOSURES

This findings from the universe of unique cases (n=24,277) that exited the TCA program at least once between October 2004 and September 2005 are presented in three separate chapters. This first chapter provides an overview of case closings by month, by jurisdiction, and relative to caseload size. The second chapter provides a detailed description of the payee and case characteristics of exiting cases, including statewide and jurisdictional analyses as well as separate analyses of child-only and traditional closing cases. The final chapter presents findings on the reasons for case closure, including a separate analysis of full family sanctions.

### Case Closings by Month

The number of cases closed during the study year was slightly lower, by 580 cases, than the year before. The decline in case closure has been steady over the years, with the exception of year six, in which we saw a slight increase. Notably, the 24,277 closures in the ninth year of reform are the lowest recorded since 1996. To a certain extent, this is not an unexpected finding or trend. This is because the TCA caseload was at record high levels at the outset of reform in 1996 and declined rapidly and steadily over the first few years such that during this study period (October 2004 – September 2005) was at a historic low.

To provide an overview of monthly case exit patterns over a one year time period, Figure 1 shows the number of cases--both child-only and traditional--that closed each month, statewide. We see that, on average, over 2,000 cases closed each month during the ninth year of reform. March 2005 had the highest number of case closings (2,176), 360 more than in September 2005, the month with the smallest number of closures (1,816). This is primarily driven by closures of traditional cases, which make up

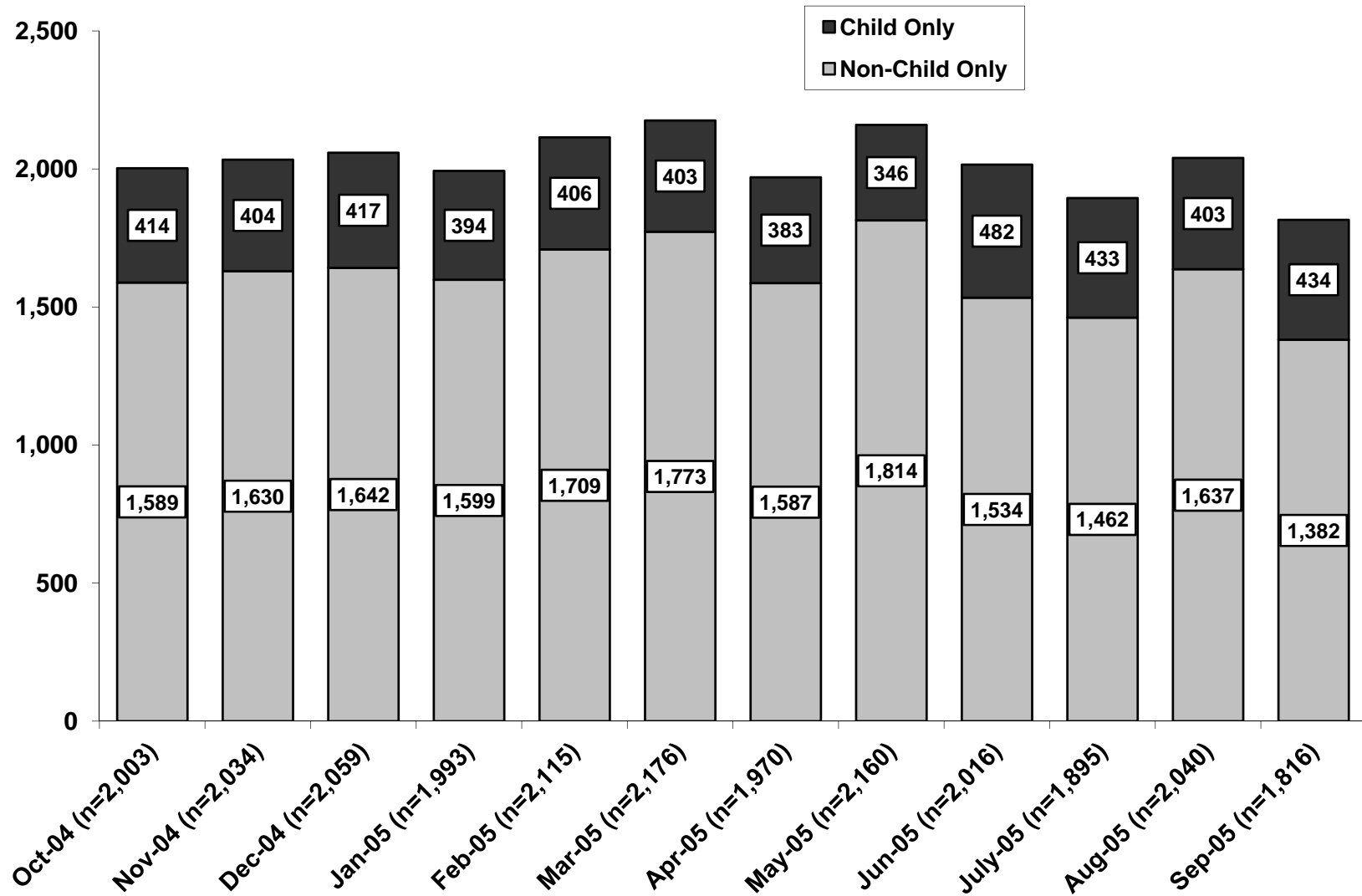
approximately four of five closings (79.7%, or 19,358 of 24,277). The number of traditional case closings in each month ranges from 1,382 to 1,814, with the month of September 2005 having the lowest and May 2005 having the highest, thus creating a parallel trend in overall closures.

The remaining statewide case closings (20.3%, or 4,919 of 24,277) are child-only cases. It is interesting to note that the number of child-only closures in the ninth year of reform is the same as in the eighth year (n=4,919). However, the percentage of child-only closures among all closings in the ninth year is slightly higher (20.3% vs. 19.8%) because the total number of case closings declined (from 24,857 to 24,277).

While the proportion of child-only cases among all closings is not insignificant, accounting for every one in five closures, it is important to note that child-only cases are actually underrepresented. Our previous study found that child-only cases account for one-third of the active TCA caseload (Hetling et al., 2005). These data suggest that child-only cases in general have a lower probability of leaving welfare than traditional cases.

Looking at year-long closing trends among child-only closings, we see a notable change between May 2005 and June 2005. In May, child-only case closures were at their lowest point during the 12-month period (n=346), but in the following month reached a high point with 136 more closures (n=482). It is interesting to note that, although May 2005 had the smallest number of child-only closings, it also had the highest number of traditional case closings.

**Figure 1. Statewide Case Closings by Month**



## Case Closings by Jurisdiction

Maryland is a diverse state with 24 jurisdictions, consisting of 23 counties and the separate, incorporated City of Baltimore. Providing jurisdictional-level data reveals the diversity within our State's exiting welfare caseload and helps inform policymakers at the local level. While Figure 1 illustrated statewide monthly case closings trends in Maryland at a glance, Table 1 provides a more thorough breakdown of case closures by jurisdiction. The right-most column in the table shows total case closures per jurisdiction regardless of case type, and the second and third columns show child-only and traditional closures, respectively. The percents in all three columns indicate the jurisdictions' share of all closings (i.e. child-only, traditional, and total).

Not surprisingly, case closings are heavily concentrated in three metropolitan jurisdictions with large caseloads: Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and Baltimore County. Baltimore City has the largest share of case closings accounting for one half (51.3%) of all closures, followed by Prince

George's (10.8%) and Baltimore Counties (9.7%). In addition, Anne Arundel (5.8%) and Montgomery (3.4%) Counties, combined, represented approximately 10% of case closures. The remaining 19 counties in Maryland accounted for the remaining 19% of case closings.

While this trend is similar regardless of case type (child-only or traditional), there are some notable distinctions among jurisdictions. As seen in the second and third columns of Table 1, 17 out of 24 jurisdictions in Maryland had equal or greater shares of child-only case closures compared to traditional case closures. The differences are sometimes as low as 0.1% (Calvert, Garrett, Harford and Worcester) but are as high as 7.3% (Prince George's). As will be presented in the next section, distribution of closings generally reflects the distribution of active cases. Therefore, a difference in the distribution of child-only vs. traditional closures indicates a difference in the distribution of active child-only vs. traditional cases. That is, child only cases are more heavily concentrated in some jurisdictions.

**Table 1. Number of Closing Cases by Type and Jurisdiction**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Child-only Cases</b>	<b>Traditional Cases</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
Allegany	1.0% (49)	0.6% (125)	0.7% (174)
Anne Arundel	6.7% (332)	5.6% (1,078)	5.8% (1,410)
Baltimore County	11.9% (587)	9.1% (1,756)	9.7% (2,343)
Calvert	0.7% (34)	0.6% (125)	0.7% (159)
Caroline	0.6% (30)	0.4% (79)	0.4% (109)
Carroll	0.8% (41)	0.8% (149)	0.8% (190)
Cecil	1.6% (77)	1.4% (278)	1.5% (355)
Charles	1.1% (55)	1.6% (305)	1.5% (360)
Dorchester	1.1% (55)	1.4% (279)	1.4% (334)
Frederick	1.3% (64)	1.4% (262)	1.3% (326)
Garrett	0.3% (15)	0.2% (45)	0.2% (60)
Harford	3.0% (150)	2.9% (552)	2.9% (702)
Howard	1.2% (60)	1.3% (246)	1.3% (306)
Kent	0.2% (11)	0.2% (31)	0.2% (42)
Montgomery	4.9% (239)	3.0% (580)	3.4% (819)
Prince George's	16.6% (817)	9.3% (1,802)	10.8% (2,619)
Queen Anne's	0.3% (15)	0.4% (68)	0.3% (83)
St. Mary's	1.6% (78)	1.0% (186)	1.1% (264)
Somerset	0.5% (25)	0.6% (111)	0.6% (136)
Talbot	0.8% (37)	0.2% (46)	0.3% (83)
Washington	1.9% (94)	1.2% (239)	1.4% (333)
Wicomico	2.3% (111)	2.1% (407)	2.1% (518)
Worcester	0.5% (23)	0.4% (71)	0.4% (94)
Baltimore City	39.0% (1,920)	54.4% (10,538)	51.3% (12,458)
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>100.0% (4,919)</b>	<b>100.0% (19,358)</b>	<b>100.0% (24,277)</b>

## Case Closings Relative to Caseload Size

As shown in Table 1, proportions of case closings vary widely among Maryland's jurisdictions. Variability in caseload size makes it difficult to contextualize raw totals of case closings at the local level. Thus, in this section, we present each jurisdiction's share of closings compared to its overall active caseload.

Data on the active caseload for our study period (October 2004 through September 2005) was obtained via FIA's monthly statistical report; the annual average caseload was calculated by the authors. Table 2 provides detailed data for each jurisdiction. The percentages shown in the last column indicate the percentage by which each jurisdiction's share of total statewide closings exceeds, equals, or is less than its share of the total statewide average annual caseload. As shown in Table 2, most jurisdictions (14 counties) have a larger share of the case closures than of the active caseload, although none of the differences are greater than 1.0% (Baltimore County). Seven counties have an equal share of closures and the active caseload; only three jurisdictions (Allegany, Wicomico, and Baltimore City) have a higher share of active cases than case closures. In other words, these three jurisdictions accounted for a smaller share of all case closings than would have been expected given their share of the total active caseload during the year. The gap or difference is largest (-2.3%) in Baltimore City, followed by Wicomico County (-1.5%) and Allegany County (-0.1%).

Using data from Table 2 in order to illustrate and compare trends over time, Figure 2, following this discussion, presents maps of the state of Maryland, showing the 24 jurisdictions. The top map shows differences between the percentages of closings and active caseload in the preceding year (October 2003 through September 2004); the bottom shows the study year (October 2004 through September 2005). Visual inspection of the two maps reveals relatively few changes year over year. It is notable, however, that Prince George's County, which along with Baltimore City and Wicomico County had fewer than expected closings in the 2003-2004 period, reversed that situation in 2004-2005. In that period, its share of case closings slightly exceeded its share of the average annual total caseload (by 0.3%). As has been documented in other studies, Prince George's County has been making significant improvement over the past years (Ovwigbo, Kolupanowich, Saunders & Born, 2005). This is reflected by the fact that this year, for the first time, it had a greater share of closings than active cases.

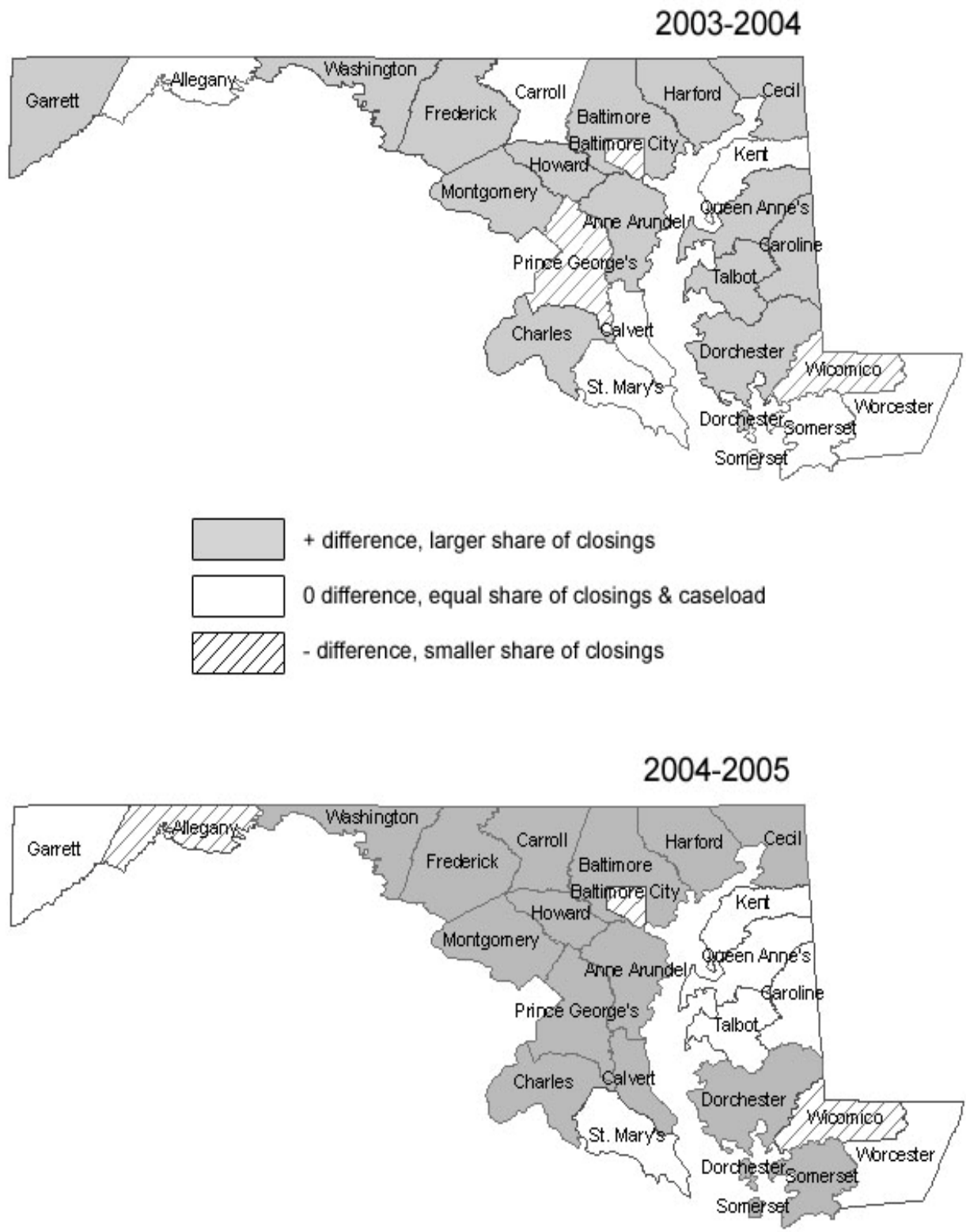
There are a few other jurisdictions where the closures-to-caseload pattern also changed between the two study years but, with two exceptions, the changes were quite minor (i.e. less than 1%). The two exceptions are Baltimore City and Wicomico County. In both study years, these two jurisdictions accounted for fewer closures than their caseload size would have predicted. In Baltimore City, however, this discrepancy decreased over time (from -3.3% to -2.3%). In Wicomico County, the discrepancy increased during the same period of time (from -0.1% to -1.5%).

**Table 2. Percents of Closings and Average Caseload, 10/04 - 9/05**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Percent of Total Closing</b>	<b>Percent of Average Caseload</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Baltimore County	9.7% (2,343)	8.7 % (2,294)	1.0
Anne Arundel	5.8% (1,410)	5.3% (1,396)	0.5
Prince George	10.8% (2,619)	10.5% (2,768)	0.3
Montgomery	3.4% ( 819)	3.1% (811)	0.3
Cecil	1.5% (355)	1.2% (322)	0.3
Dorchester	1.4% (334)	1.1% (291)	0.3
Hartford	2.9% (702)	2.6% (692)	0.3
Howard	1.3% (306)	1.1% (279)	0.2
Washington	1.4% (333)	1.2% (316)	0.2
Charles	1.5% (360)	1.4% (360)	0.1
Frederick	1.3% (326)	1.2% (317)	0.1
Calvert	0.7% (159)	0.6% (155)	0.1
Somerset	0.6% (136)	0.5% (143)	0.1
Carroll	0.8% (190)	0.7% (191)	0.1
Caroline	0.4% (109)	0.4% (116)	0.0
Queen Anne's	0.3% (83)	0.3% (78)	0.0
Garrett	0.2% (60)	0.2% (48)	0.0
Talbot	0.3% (83)	0.3% (84)	0.0
Worcester	0.4% (94)	0.4% (98)	0.0
Kent	0.2% (42)	0.2% (45)	0.0
St. Mary's	1.1% (264)	1.1% (285)	0.0
Allegany	0.7% (174)	0.8% (200)	-0.1
Wicomico	2.1% (518)	3.6% (935)	-1.5
Baltimore City	51.3% (12,458)	53.6% (14,094)	-2.3
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>100% (24,277)</b>	<b>100% (26,318)</b>	<b>-----</b>



**Figure 2. Difference between Percent of Statewide Closings and Percent of Statewide Caseload by Jurisdiction, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005**



## FINDINGS: CHARACTERISTICS OF EXITING CASES

In the previous chapter, we discussed monthly closing trends, case closings by jurisdiction, and case closings relative to caseload size. In this chapter, we focus on the demographic characteristics of exiting payees; statewide data as well as jurisdictional analyses by case type are provided. This report continues the practice of separately analyzing and reporting on two types of exiting cases: child-only and traditional. Specifically, for each type of case we provide information describing payee and case characteristics, welfare histories and case closure reasons at both statewide and jurisdictional levels. We begin with our statewide analysis of the overall universe of exiting cases, starting with a description of subgroups of child-only case closures included in our analyses. This is followed by a discussion of statewide exiting cases (overall, and by child-only and traditional cohorts). This chapter ends with a discussion of jurisdiction-level findings on exiting cases (overall, and by child-only and traditional cohorts).

### Types of Child-only Closings

Table 3, following this discussion, presents data on the types of child-only cases that closed in Maryland during the study period. Consistent with the findings from the preceding year, the large majority (70.5%) of

child-only cases are non-parental cases (i.e. the child or children live with relatives who are not their biological parents). About three in ten child-only cases (29.4%) are parental child-only cases; children in these cases live with a parent who is not included in the case. A little less than one-quarter (23.2%) of the entire child-only closing cohort are those in which the parent of parents receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and a small minority of child-only cases (3.2%) include children of immigrant parents who do not meet TCA eligibility requirements.

Looking only at the parental child-only group, it is clear that the most common situation, by far, is where the resident parent is receiving SSI. Such cases account for not quite 80% (78.9% or 1,142 of 1,446) of all parental child-only cases which closed in the study period. Overall, these findings are generally consistent with analyses of the active TCA caseload for roughly the same time period. Among all active child-only cases, 75% were of the non-parental type and upwards of 80% of parental cases were associated with the parent's receipt of SSI (Hetling, et al, 2005). The same study found a little over one-fifth (21.9%) of all child-only cases were parental SSI cases. Lastly, a small portion of active child-only cases included immigrant parents (2.2%), sanctioned parents (0.6%) and other parental cases (0.2%), respectively (Hetling et al., 2005).

**Table 3. Types of Child-only Closings**

Child-Only Case Types	Percentage (Number) of Cases
Non-parental cases	70.5% (3,460)
Parents receiving SSI	23.2% (1,142)
Parents' immigrant status	3.2% (157)
Sanctioned parents	0.1% (7)
Other parental	2.9% (140)

**Note:** Sanctioned parents include those who have not complied 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.

## Characteristics of Exiting Cases and Payees: Statewide

### All Cases

Table 4, following this discussion, describes the characteristics of payees and cases that closed during our study period, including the length of the welfare spell that resulted in case closure, the number of adults and children in the cases, the size of the assistance unit, the payee's race, gender, and age, the estimated age at first birth, and the age of youngest child in the case. It provides statewide payee and case characteristics regardless of case type as well as separate data describing child-only and traditional cases.

The upper right corner of Table 4 displays the average length of the welfare spell that ended in the closure that brought the case into our study. Our findings for the study year closely resemble those from the year before. On average, exiting customers had received TCA assistance for one year. The large majority, three quarters of the cases (75.0%), had received welfare for twelve months or fewer, and 16% exited welfare after receiving it for 13 to 24 months. Cases with longer spells (more than three years), constitute a small portion (4.4%) of all closures.

As shown in the fourth and fifth rows of Table 4, the large majority of cases included one adult (76.9%). The most common situation among closing cases is an assistance unit containing only one child (47.3%). The remaining cases (49.6%) were those where two (27.6%) or three or more children (22.0%) had been on the grant. For all exiting cases as a whole, on average, assistance unit size was 2.6 people with a range from one to twelve people. The median or midpoint assistance unit consisted of 2.0 people.

Consistent with results from previous years, the vast majority of exiting payees (95.3%) are women, and most (79.6%) are African-

American. In terms of age, the mean age of payees was 34 but individual ages range from 17 to 90. Conservatively, three out of five (58.8%) exiting mothers gave birth to their first child before the age of 21, and about one in four (25.5%) had their first child before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the last row in Table 4, we also report the age of youngest child. On average, the youngest child is six years old, with median age of four years. Two in five (40.7%) closing cases include a child under the age of three.

### Child-Only vs. Traditional Cases

Statewide, among all exiting cases, the large majority (75%) of cases was exiting from a welfare spell that had lasted for 12 or fewer consecutive months, but there were statistically significant differences between child-only and traditional cases. Whereas about eight of 10 (81.2%) traditional cases were exiting from such a short spell, the proportion among child-only cases, as a group, was only 50.5%. The mean or average spell length also differed significantly between the two groups (8.7 months among traditional cases vs. 24.8 months among child-only cases). These findings are consistent with the literature and our own studies of Maryland's child-only cases.

In terms of assistance unit size, three out of five child-only closures (64.1%) had one child, compared to 43.0% of the traditional type. Furthermore, only 12.0% of child-only closings had an assistance unit size of three or more, whereas more than half of the traditional closing cases (54.2%) had three or more members in the assistance unit. Subsequently, the average assistance unit for traditional closing cases had twice as many members as child-only closing cases (2.9 people vs. 1.5 people).

The mean age of payees also differs significantly between the child-only and traditional groups. Consistent with other studies we find that payees in child-only cases were, on average, 16 years older than payees in the traditional cases (46.7 years vs. 30.6 years).

This trend is not surprising, given that the majority of child-only cases are non-parental and most of these relative caregivers are grandparents.

As the age of children is directly related to the need for child care, we also looked at the age of youngest child in the exiting cases. The youngest child in child-only cases was nine years of age, on average, compared to five years for traditional cases. This

is also consistent with research trends on child-only cases that indicate children in these cases tend to be older and fewer in number than in traditional cases (Charlesworth, Hercik & Kakuska, (n.d.)).

Close to half (46.5%) of the traditional cases had a child under three, but only 16.9% of the child-only cases included a child that young.

**Table 4. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics: Statewide**

	<b>Child-only Cases</b>	<b>Traditional Cases</b>	<b>All Cases</b>
<b>Number of Closing Cases</b>	4,919	19,358	24,277
<b>Length of Exiting Spell***</b>			
12 months or fewer	50.5%	81.2%	75.0%
13-24 months	21.1%	14.6%	15.9%
25-36 months	11.9%	3.0%	4.8%
37-48 months	5.2%	0.8%	1.7%
49-60 months	3.2%	0.3%	0.9%
More than 60 months	8.1%	0.2%	1.8%
Mean*** [Median]	24.8 [12]	8.7 [6.6]	12 [7.9]
Range	1 - 402	1 - 245	1 - 402
<b>Number of Adults</b>			
0 (Child-only)	100.0%	0.0%	20.3%
1	0.0%	96.4%	76.9%
2	0.0%	3.6%	2.8%
<b>Number of Children***</b>			
0	0.0%	4.1%	3.2%
1	64.1%	43.0%	47.3%
2	23.9%	28.5%	27.6%
3 or more	12.0%	24.5%	22.0%
<b>Size of Assistance Unit</b>			
1	64.1%	4.0%	16.2%
2	23.9%	41.9%	38.3%
3	8.5%	28.7%	24.6%
4 or more	3.5%	25.5%	21.0%
Mean [Median]	1.5 [1]	2.9 [3]	2.6 [2]
Range	1 - 8	1 - 12	1 - 12
<b>% African-American***</b>	75.8%	80.6%	79.6%
<b>% Female***</b>	92.1%	96.1%	95.3%
<b>Age of Payee</b>			
Mean*** [Median]	46.7 [46.3]	30.6 [28.5]	33.9 [31.3]
Range	18 - 89	17 - 83	17.3 - 89.7
<b>Estimated Age at First Birth</b>			
Mean [Median]	--	21.7 [20]	21.7 [20]
Range	--	10 - 47	10 - 47
% who gave birth before 18	--	25.5%	25.5%
% who gave birth before 21	--	58.8%	58.8%
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>			
Mean*** [Median]	9.1 [9.4]	5.1 [3.4]	5.9 [4.2]
Range (years)	<1 yr - 18	<1 yr - 18	<1yr - 18
% cases with a child under 3***	16.9%	46.5%	40.7%

**Note:** Age at first birth was calculated using the payee's date of birth and the date of birth of her oldest child in the assistance unit. If payees have older children not included in the assistance unit, our figures will understate the true rate of early child-bearing among the sample. 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<.001

## **Characteristics of Exiting Cases and Payees: Jurisdictional Analysis**

The previous section illustrates the overall picture of exiting cases and payees for the State of Maryland as a whole. We now turn our attention to Maryland's 24 jurisdictions in order to examine differences among subdivisions. Following the discussion, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 provide demographic information on all case closures. Subsequent tables present data separately for child-only and traditional cases.

### **All Cases**

Tables 5 through 8 are critical to this report because they provide detailed information on case closings in each jurisdiction during the study year. They include length of the welfare spell leading up to the exit, case size and composition, payee characteristics (race, gender, age), and age of the youngest child.

### **Length of Exiting TCA Spell**

In all 24 jurisdictions, exiting families were most commonly ending a TCA spell of 12 months or less. It is good news that most families exited welfare after receiving benefits for a relatively short period of time. However, rates vary among the jurisdictions, ranging from 64.4% (Prince George's County) to 87.9% (Cecil County). The average length of exiting spell also varies. Most jurisdictions have a mean spell length of 12 months or less. Only five counties had an average exiting spell of longer than one year. These are the counties of Garrett (12.2 months), Kent (18.0 months), Prince George's (17.4 months), St. Mary's (15.7 months), and Talbot (12.9 months).

### **Case, Payee, and Child Characteristics**

The average size of the assistance unit ranges from a high of 2.8 persons (Cecil, Queen Anne's and Wicomico Counties) to a low of 2.4 persons (Garrett and Kent Coun-

ties). The median or midpoint assistance unit size was 2.0 persons in 21 of 24 jurisdictions; in the remaining three (Cecil, Queen Anne's, and Wicomico Counties) the median assistance unit contained three people. In terms of the number of adults in the case, the majority of exiting cases across jurisdictions have only one adult on the case. However, some variation exists among jurisdictions. In Talbot County, a little over half of all cases (54.2%) have one adult on the case. At the other extreme are Baltimore City and Charles County where 82.4% and 81.9% of exiting cases, respectively, had only one adult on the case. There are also notable differences across the state in the percentage of two-adult cases in this year's exiting cohorts. Queen Anne's County had the largest proportion of such cases (14.5%) while at the other end of the spectrum, Kent and Worcester Counties had no exiting cases which included two adults.

Examination of the number of adults naturally leads to looking at the proportion of cases with no adults on assistance which, by definition, are child-only cases. Although earlier in this report we presented the distribution of child-only closings across jurisdictions, Tables 5 through 8 present the data slightly differently, telling us what percent of closings within each jurisdiction was child-only. In most jurisdictions (17 out of 24), child-only cases accounted for between 20% and 30% of case closings. Child-only exiting cases were less common in five localities: Charles (15.3%), Dorchester (16.5%), Queen Anne's (18.1%), and Somerset Counties (18.4%), as well as Baltimore City (15.4%). Talbot County is unique in that more than two out of five (44.6%) of its exiting cases were child-only cases.

The number of children in the assistance unit is also of interest to program managers because household composition is related to child care needs and/or utilization and may affect job retention, especially among single parent assistance cases (Lewin & Maurin, 2005). On this dimension, we find little jurisdictional variability; in 23 of 24 ju-

risdictions roughly 40% to 50% of exiting cases include only one child in the assistance unit. In most jurisdictions (18 of 24), at least one in five families were observed to have three or more children in the assistance unit.

Tables 5 through 8 also illustrates that, in terms of a profile of the typical exiting payee, the picture varies substantially by jurisdiction. While it is true that many of Maryland's jurisdictions have mostly African-American customers, ranging from 50.6% in Queen Anne's County to 93.6% in Prince George's County and Baltimore City, most payees are Caucasian in the following counties: Allegany, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington. Among counties with mostly Caucasian exiting payees, the proportion of that group ranges

from 53.2% in Calvert County to 98.3% in Garrett County. The variability in ethnic background indicates the diverse picture of our state and the racial composition of the counties' populations. In terms of gender, the majority of jurisdictions included over 90% female payees with the exception of two counties, Calvert (88.1% female payees), and Garrett (86.7% female payees).

In terms of the age of the youngest child in the assistance unit, the average age ranged from four to six years old, and the median ranged from three to five years old. In 20 counties, at least two in five (40% or more) exiting cases had children under three years old. Most closing cases included a pre-school- or kindergarten-aged child.

**Table 5. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (Allegany through Carroll Counties)**

	<b>Allegany</b>	<b>Anne Arundel</b>	<b>Baltimore County</b>	<b>Calvert</b>	<b>Caroline</b>	<b>Carroll</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	174	1,410	2,343	159	109	190
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	78.2%	80.0%	79.9%	83.6%	81.7%	81.6%
13 - 24 months	14.9%	12.6%	11.8%	5.7%	11.9%	12.1%
25 - 36 months	4.0%	3.9%	3.9%	5.7%	4.6%	3.7%
37 - 48 months	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	1.9%	0.9%	2.1%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
More than 60 months	1.7%	0.9%	2.1%	3.1%	0.9%	0.5%
Mean [Median]	9.4 [4.6]	11.1 [8.1]	10.7 [5.6]	9.7 [3.9]	8.4 [4.8]	9.2 [6.5]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	2.4 [2.0]	2.6 [2.0]	2.5 [2.0]	2.6 [2.0]	2.6 [2.0]	2.5 [2.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
0	28.2%	23.6%	25.1%	21.4%	27.5%	21.6%
1	62.6%	72.0%	72.2%	73.6%	67.9%	68.9%
2	9.2%	4.4%	2.8%	5.0%	4.6%	9.5%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	4.0%	3.4%	2.2%	1.9%	3.7%	5.8%
1	54.0%	47.0%	52.3%	49.1%	39.4%	50.5%
2	23.0%	26.8%	27.7%	28.3%	35.8%	28.9%
3 or more	19.0%	22.7%	17.8%	20.8%	21.1%	14.7%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	87.2%	38.8%	32.4%	53.2%	46.8%	84.1%
% African American	12.8%	58.7%	64.9%	44.3%	49.5%	11.5%
% Female	93.1%	95.2%	95.1%	88.1%	94.5%	90.5%
Mean Age [Median]	33.8	34.8	33.9	35.8	32.9	33.54
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	5.6 [3.3]	5.9 [4.2]	5.5 [3.4]	6.5 [5.3]	5.2 [3.1]	5.6 [3.3]
% cases with a child under 3	47.3%	41.1%	47.1%	33.1%	49.5%	47.8%



**Table 6. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (Cecil through Harford Counties)**

	<b>Cecil</b>	<b>Charles</b>	<b>Dorchester</b>	<b>Frederick</b>	<b>Garrett</b>	<b>Harford</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	355	360	334	326	60	702
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	87.9%	79.7%	82.3%	82.5%	70.0%	79.5%
13 - 24 months	7.6%	13.6%	12.3%	11.3%	20.0%	13.1%
25 - 36 months	2.3%	4.2%	2.4%	3.1%	5.0%	2.9%
37 - 48 months	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.4%
49 - 60 months	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	1.4%
More than 60 months	1.4%	1.4%	2.1%	0.9%	3.3%	1.7%
Mean [Median]	8.2 [4.5]	9.2 [5.6]	10.3 [5.7]	9.2 [4.7]	12.2 [6.0]	11.3 [7.0]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	2.8 [3.00]	2.6 [2.00]	2.6 [2.00]	2.7 [2.0]	2.4 [2.0]	2.7 [2.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
0	21.7%	15.3%	16.5%	19.6%	25.0%	21.4%
1	71.3%	81.9%	78.4%	75.5%	70.0%	74.6%
2	7.0%	2.8%	5.1%	4.9%	5.0%	4.0%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	2.8%	3.3%	5.1%	2.8%	1.7%	1.6%
1	42.0%	47.5%	47.6%	46.6%	51.7%	48.2%
2	29.6%	28.9%	25.4%	30.1%	36.7%	27.4%
3 or more	25.6%	20.3%	21.9%	20.6%	10.0%	22.8%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	76.9%	29.9%	24.2%	54.1%	98.3%	43.0%
% African American	20.0%	67.8%	72.2%	39.4%	0.0%	52.1%
% Female	94.9%	95.6%	97.0%	96.6%	86.7%	94.0%
Mean Age [Median]	32.9 [30.6]	32.4 [30.6]	31.4 [28.4]	32.6 [30.0]	33.5 [32.0]	33.9 [31.4]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	5.8 [4.6]	5.8[3.6]	5.2[3.5]	5.0[3.1]	6.2[4.2]	5.4[3.4]
% cases with a child under 3	40.1%	43.6%	46.8%	49.0%	43.1%	45.0%

**Table 7. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (Howard through St. Mary's Counties)**

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	306	42	819	2619	83	264
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	81.7%	76.2%	78.6%	64.4%	86.7%	65.2%
13 - 24 months	11.8%	11.9%	12.4%	18.3%	7.2%	23.9%
25 - 36 months	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%	7.2%	3.6%	4.2%
37 - 48 months	2.0%	7.1%	1.6%	3.4%	1.2%	1.9%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	2.2%	1.2%	0.8%
More than 60 months	1.3%	4.8%	3.1%	4.5%	0.0%	4.2%
Mean [Median]	9.2 [4.7]	18.0 [4.6]	11.6 [6.1]	17.4 [10.3]	7.4 [4.2]	15.7 [10.4]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	2.6 [2.0]	2.4 [2.0]	2.6 [2.0]	2.6 [2.0]	2.8 [3.0]	2.6 [2.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
0	19.6%	26.2%	29.3%	31.2%	18.1%	29.5%
1	76.1%	73.8%	68.5%	67.0%	67.5%	65.9%
2	4.2%	0.0%	2.2%	1.8%	14.5%	4.5%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	2.3%	0.0%	2.0%	4.4%	3.6%	1.1%
1	48.4%	54.8%	47.5%	46.7%	43.4%	46.6%
2	31.4%	26.2%	28.5%	25.9%	32.5%	29.9%
3 or more	18.0%	19.0%	22.0%	23.0%	20.5%	22.3%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	24.9%	40.5%	13.7%	3.3%	47.0%	49.0%
% African American	69.6%	54.8%	73.5%	93.6%	50.6%	49.8%
% Female	94.8%	97.6%	94.7%	95.6%	96.4%	92.8%
Mean Age [Median]	33.3 [32.4]	33.7 [29.9]	36.3 [34.7]	36.8 [34.3]	34.4 [33.6]	36.2 [35.4]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	5.2 [3.2]	5.1 [3.1]	5.9 [4.1]	6.6 [5.0]	6.1 [3.3]	6.7 [5.4]
% cases with a child under 3	48.3%	48.7%	42.0%	37.1%	46.3%	34.5%

**Table 8. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: All Cases (Somerset through Worcester Counties, and Baltimore City)**

	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Talbot</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Wicomico</b>	<b>Worcester</b>	<b>Baltimore City</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	136	83	333	518	94	12458
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	69.9%	66.3%	83.5%	78.0%	73.4%	73.7%
13 - 24 months	18.4%	22.9%	9.9%	15.3%	18.1%	17.7%
25 - 36 months	5.9%	3.6%	3.0%	3.9%	4.3%	5.2%
37 - 48 months	2.2%	2.4%	1.5%	0.6%	0.0%	1.5%
49 - 60 months	1.5%	2.4%	0.6%	1.0%	1.1%	0.6%
More than 60 months	2.2%	2.4%	1.5%	1.4%	3.2%	1.2%
Mean [Median]	11.5 [5.7]	12.9 [5.4]	9.0 [4.9]	10.6 [6.8]	11.7 [5.4]	11.8 [8.7]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	2.7 [2.0]	2.2 [2.0]	2.7 [2.0]	2.8 [3.0]	2.7 [2.0]	2.7 [2.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
0	18.4%	44.6%	28.2%	21.4%	24.5%	15.4%
1	75.0%	54.2%	67.6%	75.5%	75.5%	82.4%
2	6.6%	1.2%	4.2%	3.1%	0.0%	2.2%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	5.1%	3.6%	1.2%	2.1%	1.1%	3.4%
1	41.9%	53.0%	43.5%	41.3%	41.5%	46.8%
2	30.9%	21.7%	31.2%	31.5%	30.9%	27.3%
3 or more	22.1%	21.7%	24.0%	25.1%	26.6%	22.5%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	36.0%	40.0%	72.0%	27.3%	27.8%	5.7%
% African American	63.2%	51.3%	25.2%	69.8%	72.2%	93.6%
% Female	97.8%	91.6%	94.6%	95.8%	96.8%	95.6%
Mean Age [Median]	33.7 [31.1]	37.9 [35.2]	32.8 [29.6]	32.7 [29.8]	35.1 [31.5]	33.2 [30.3]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	5.7 [3.5]	5.7 [3.3]	4.1 [1.7]	5.1 [3.1]	5.3 [2.9]	6.0 [4.4]
% cases with a child under 3	44.6%	44.3%	59.5%	48.6%	52.7%	38.1%

## **Child-only Cases**

The following discussion is based on findings presented in Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12, and highlights jurisdictional variation in payee and case characteristics and welfare histories of child-only closing cases at the jurisdictional level.

### **Type of Child-Only Closing**

As seen in Tables 9 through 12, non-parental child-only case closings outnumber parental ones in all 24 jurisdictions, often by a wide margin. In 8 of 24 subdivisions (the Counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Caroline, Frederick, Harford, Queen Anne's, Somerset, and Worcester), three-quarters or more of all exiting child-only cases were non-parental, with the highest proportion (86.7%) observed in Queen Anne's County. Even in the two jurisdictions with the smallest proportion of non-parental cases (Alleghany and Kent Counties), more than half (53.1% and 54.5%, respectively) of all child-only cases were non-parental.

Jurisdiction-level findings with regard to parental child-only cases generally parallel statewide findings. In all but two jurisdictions (Montgomery and Queen Anne's Counties), parental receipt of SSI is the most common reason for the case being child-only. In Queen Anne's County half of all parental cases were due to SSI benefit receipt and half were due to other reasons. In Montgomery County, SSI receipt accounted for about two-fifths (42.2%) of all parental child-only case closures, but about three-fifths (57.7%) were due to other reasons, most likely parental immigration status.

### **Length of Exiting TCA Spell**

As is often true in the small but diverse State of Maryland, the statewide data on exiting spell masks important intra-state variation. Thus, Tables 9 through 12 also present information on the length of exiting spell for each county's child-only exiting cases. In all but two counties (Kent and

Worcester), the most common situation was the same as when statewide data are considered: exiting spells of 12 months or less. In Kent and Worcester Counties, more families were exiting from a 13-24 month spell than from a spell of 12 or fewer months. For these two counties the proportions are 36.4% vs. 27.3% and 47.8% vs. 30.4% for 13-24 months and 1-12 months spells, respectively.

In addition to the categorical breakdown of exiting spell length, the average length of the exiting spell that led up to case closure also varies somewhat across jurisdictions. Statewide, the typical child-only exiting case had been on cash assistance for roughly two years (24.8 months) at the time of case closure, on average. Across the counties, mean or average spell length tended to cluster between one and one-half and two years. The shortest average spell length was observed in Caroline County (15 months) while the longest average spell was in Kent County (53 months).

### **Case, Payee, and Child Characteristics**

We also looked at average assistance unit size, number of children per case, and payee's demographic characteristics for child-only closures in each jurisdiction. In general, local level profiles were quite similar to the statewide profile (typically a one-person, one-child assistance unit headed by an African-American female in her mid-40s). In 22 of 24 jurisdictions, half or more of all child-only closing cases contained only one child. In Charles (50.9%) and Garrett (53.3%) Counties, there were just slightly more cases containing two or more children than there were with only one child on the grant. A few differences in payee ethnicity were observed, but these reflect the overall characteristics of the local populations. Finally, in terms of average payee age, payees in child-only exiting cases across all jurisdictions tended to range in age from 40 years to roughly their mid-50s, averaging 46.7 years for the state as a whole. This is

higher than the mean age of traditional caseheads by about 16 years (mean 30.6 years), and the difference is statistically significant.

The last row of cells in Tables 9 through 12 present information about the average ages of the youngest children in exiting child-only cases and the proportion of cases with at least one child under the age of three years. It will be recalled that, for the state as a whole, the average age of the youngest child in these cases was 9.0 years and that only a small minority of cases (16.9%) included a toddler child. In general, the same

pattern prevails in most jurisdictions; youngest children in these cases are, on average, between seven and nine years of age. The average age of the youngest child was highest (10.4 years) in Charles county and lowest (6.6 years) in Talbot county. There is somewhat of a bifurcation in terms of the percent of child-only cases containing a child under the age of three years: in 11 of 24 jurisdictions, less than 20% of child-only exiting cases had a child this young, while in 13 counties the percentages were 20% or greater. In this study year, the proportion of child-only exiting cases with young children was highest (32.4%) in Talbot County

**Table 9. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child-only Cases (Allegany through Carroll Counties)**

	<b>Allegany</b>	<b>Anne Arundel</b>	<b>Baltimore County</b>	<b>Calvert</b>	<b>Caroline</b>	<b>Carroll</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	49	332	587	34	30	41
<b>Type of Child-only Case</b>						
Non-Parental	53.1%	78.6%	76.5%	67.6%	80.0%	58.5%
Parental – SSI	46.9%	15.4%	20.6%	29.4%	13.3%	31.7%
Parental – Other	0.0%	6.0%	2.9%	2.9%	6.7%	9.8%
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	53.1%	58.7%	53.5%	47.1%	63.3%	58.5%
13 - 24 months	30.6%	17.8%	20.6%	14.7%	16.7%	17.1%
25 - 36 months	8.2%	10.8%	9.5%	20.6%	13.3%	14.6%
37 - 48 months	2.0%	5.4%	4.4%	8.8%	3.3%	7.3%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	3.3%	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
More than 60 months	6.1%	3.9%	8.0%	8.8%	3.3%	2.4%
Mean [Median]	17.0 [11.6]	20.9 [11.6]	23.6 [11.8]	22.4 [13.3]	14.9 [8.1]	16.2 [11.1]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	1.7[1.0]	1.5 [1.0]	1.4 [1.0]	1.4 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]	1.3 [1.0]
<b>Number of Children</b>						
1	61.2%	65.4%	69.5%	67.6%	56.7%	78.0%
2	18.4%	22.0%	24.0%	23.5%	33.3%	17.1%
3 or more	20.4%	12.7%	6.5%	8.8%	10.0%	4.9%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	83.3%	38.6%	35.5%	41.2%	43.3%	75.7%
% African American	16.7%	57.3%	62.7%	58.8%	46.7%	16.2%
% Female	93.9%	91.0%	90.8%	67.6%	86.7%	92.7%
Mean Age [Median]	45.8 [44.8]	47.4 [47.3]	46.1 [46.2]	50.3 [46.7]	43.9 [48.3]	43.5 [42.8]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	9.0 [9.9]	9.2 [9.1]	9.2 [9.4]	9.4 [11.0]	8.1 [8.1]	8.9 [9.6]
% cases with a child under 3	17.0%	12.5%	16.6%	10.0%	21.4%	25.6%

**Table 10. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child-only Cases (Cecil through Harford Counties)**

	<b>Cecil</b>	<b>Charles</b>	<b>Dorchester</b>	<b>Frederick</b>	<b>Garrett</b>	<b>Harford</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	77	55	55	64	15	150
<b>Type of Child-only Case</b>						
Non-Parental	67.5%	63.6%	67.3%	76.6%	60.0%	77.3%
Parental – SSI	26.0%	27.3%	20.0%	14.0%	40.0%	20.7%
Parental – Other	6.5%	9.1%	12.7%	9.4%	0.0%	2.0%
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	66.2%	52.7%	49.1%	56.3%	60.0%	59.3%
13 - 24 months	18.2%	29.1%	20.0%	17.2%	6.7%	17.3%
25 - 36 months	6.5%	7.3%	12.7%	10.9%	13.3%	8.7%
37 - 48 months	2.6%	0.0%	3.6%	7.8%	6.7%	2.0%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	3.6%	1.8%	3.1%	0.0%	5.3%
More than 60 months	6.5%	7.3%	12.7%	4.7%	13.3%	7.3%
Mean [Median]	17.7 [10.7]	18.3 [11.7]	29.6 [12.9]	22.1 [10.8]	24.9 [10.1]	23.3 [11.1]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	1.6 [1.0]	1.6 [2.0]	1.7 [1.0]	1.4 [1.0]	1.7 [2.0]	1.5 [1.0]
<b>Number of Children</b>						
1	62.3%	49.1%	61.8%	68.8%	46.7%	67.3%
2	20.8%	38.2%	18.2%	23.4%	33.3%	21.3%
3 or more	16.9%	12.7%	20.0%	7.8%	20.0%	11.3%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	73.7%	32.7%	21.8%	49.2%	100.0%	39.0%
% African American	23.7%	67.3%	76.4%	41.3%	0.0%	54.1%
% Female	96.1%	94.5%	94.5%	95.3%	80.0%	90.7%
Mean Age [Median]	40.8 [39.2]	44.8 [44.4]	44.7 [44.4]	43.9 [44.5]	43.6 [45.3]	46.2 [46.5]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	8.6 [7.5]	10.4 [12.2]	8.1 [9.1]	8.1 [6.8]	9.1 [9.1]	8.6 [8.3]
% cases with a child under 3	15.8%	14.8%	23.5%	20.0%	21.4%	23.9%

**Table 11. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child-only Cases (Howard through St. Mary's Counties)**

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	60	11	239	817	15	78
<b>Type of Child-only Case</b>						
Non-Parental	66.7%	54.5%	56.5%	73.3%	86.7%	69.2%
Parental – SSI	20.0%	27.3%	18.4%	17.0%	6.7%	28.2%
Parental – Other	13.3%	18.2%	25.1%	9.7%	6.7%	2.6%
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	53.3%	27.3%	55.6%	43.1%	53.3%	50.0%
13 - 24 months	21.7%	36.4%	18.8%	19.0%	20.0%	26.9%
25 - 36 months	10.0%	0.0%	8.4%	12.1%	13.3%	7.7%
37 - 48 months	8.3%	18.2%	4.6%	6.9%	6.7%	2.6%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	5.4%	6.7%	2.6%
More than 60 months	6.7%	18.2%	9.6%	13.6%	0.0%	10.3%
Mean [Median]	22.1 [11.6]	53.3 [20.2]	23.9 [11.7]	31.2 [21.7]	17.8 [9.9]	25.6 [12.0]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	1.4 [1.0]	1.2 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]	1.5 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]
<b>Number of Children</b>						
1	71.7%	81.8%	58.2%	60.7%	66.7%	57.7%
2	18.3%	18.2%	24.7%	26.1%	20.0%	29.5%
3 or more	10.0%	0.0%	17.2%	13.2%	13.3%	12.8%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	33.3%	54.5%	13.5%	3.4%	33.3%	50.7%
% African American	56.1%	36.4%	67.7%	91.7%	60.0%	49.3%
% Female	96.7%	90.9%	92.9%	93.6%	93.3%	92.3%
Mean Age [Median]	44.2 [44.0]	49.1 [47.0]	44.8 [42.4]	48.4 [48.5]	46.0 [45.6]	44.5 [45.2]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	7.6 [7.4]	9.0 [9.5]	8.0 [6.9]	9.9 [10.3]	8.0 [5.7]	8.7 [8.9]
% cases with a child under 3	20.7%	12.5%	21.2%	11.2%	26.7%	18.2%



**Table 12. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Child-only Cases (Somerset through Worcester Counties and Baltimore City)**

	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Talbot</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Wicomico</b>	<b>Worcester</b>	<b>Baltimore City</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	25	37	94	111	23	1920
<b>Type of Child-only Case</b>						
Non-Parental	84.0%	70.3%	68.1%	67.6%	87.0%	67.8%
Parental – SSI	12.0%	16.2%	24.5%	25.2%	13.0%	28.3%
Parental – Other	4.0%	13.5%	7.4%	7.2%	0.0%	3.9%
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	36.0%	54.1%	66.0%	52.3%	30.4%	48.2%
13 - 24 months	16.0%	27.0%	12.8%	27.9%	47.8%	22.8%
25 - 36 months	24.0%	5.4%	8.5%	11.7%	8.7%	14.0%
37 - 48 months	8.0%	5.4%	5.3%	1.8%	0.0%	5.4%
49 - 60 months	4.0%	2.7%	2.1%	1.8%	0.0%	2.7%
More than 60 months	12.0%	5.4%	5.3%	4.5%	13.0%	6.9%
Mean [Median]	27.7 [24.0]	19.5 [11.8]	17.1 [9.7]	19.9 [11.6]	25.5 [15.0]	25.1 [13.4]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	1.4 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]	1.6 [1.0]	1.5 [2.0]	1.5 [1.0]
<b>Number of Children</b>						
1	60.0%	59.5%	60.6%	63.1%	47.8%	65.0%
2	36.0%	18.9%	27.7%	21.6%	52.2%	22.8%
3 or more	4.0%	21.6%	11.7%	15.3%	0.0%	12.2%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	36.0%	33.3%	67.8%	24.3%	22.7%	7.0%
% African American	60.0%	52.8%	30.0%	69.2%	77.3%	91.6%
% Female	96.0%	89.2%	88.3%	89.2%	100.0%	92.2%
Mean Age [Median]	49.6 [44.2]	47.4 [48.2]	43.8 [43.2]	45.0 [45.9]	50.1 [49.5]	47.2 [47.0]
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	9.0 [7.0]	6.6 [5.7]	7.1 [5.3]	8.1 [7.7]	9.1 [10.2]	9.4 [10.1]
% cases with a child under 3	16.7%	32.4%	24.7%	22.7%	26.1%	17.3%

## Traditional Cases

In Tables 13, 14, 15, and 16, following this discussion, we present separate jurisdiction-level information on the same variables described previously, but for traditional cases that closed and not child-only cases. So-called traditional cases are those which have historically predominated (i.e. a single parent with one or two children) and for whom TANF time limits and work requirements were intended. Although their absolute numbers have declined dramatically since 1996, traditional cases still constitute the majority of active cases, nationally and in Maryland, and the majority of cases that close.

### Length of Exiting TCA Spell

We begin with information describing how long traditional cases had been on welfare without interruption at the time they closed. For the statewide traditional exiting sample, we saw in Table 4 that the vast majority of spells (81.2%) were short – that is, had lasted for 12 or fewer months and, further, that the typical traditional case statewide had an average spell length of 8.7 months. Tables 13 through 16 reveal little variation on either of these measures across the 24 subdivisions. In all locales, the majority of spells leading up to the exit had been of 12 or fewer months' duration. Even in the counties with the lowest percentage of traditional cases closing within one year or less (St. Mary's County, 71.5% and Garrett County, 73.3%), more than seven of 10 cases were exiting from relatively short spells.

We also looked separately at the average length of the welfare spell leading up to case closure. In 21 of 24 jurisdictions, the average pre-exit TCA spell had lasted between six and eight months. In three locales – Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties and Baltimore City – average spell length was longer. The mean spell lengths for the three jurisdictions were 11.2 months, 11.6 months, and 9.4 months, respectively.

## Case, Payee, and Child Characteristics

For each jurisdiction, average assistance unit size, number of adults and children on the case, payee ethnicity and age are presented in the middle section of Tables 13 through 16. Information about the extent of early childbearing among payees is also presented. Statewide, among all traditional cases that closed during the study year, the typical case consisted of one adult and one or two children, with the case being headed by an African-American woman whose age, on average, was 30 years. On most of these variables, most jurisdictions' profiles were similar, but there were a few outliers. In terms of case composition, one-adult assistance units predominated everywhere. Even in the subdivision with the smallest percentage of one-adult cases (Queen Anne's County), more than eight in ten (82.4%) traditional exiting cases were of this configuration.

Also, across jurisdictions, most traditional exiting cases contained one or two children. In 19 jurisdictions, one-child assistance units predominated; in one county (Caroline) two-child assistance units were most common, accounting for 36.7% of all traditional exiting cases, compared to one-child units which represented 32.9%. In four other counties (Cecil, Queen Anne's, Washington and Wicomico) the percentages of one-child and two-child assistance units were roughly equal.

It is also worth noting that large families, those containing three or more children, were not uncommon among traditional cases which exited during this study year. Large cases were not the majority in any jurisdiction, by far, but in 11 of 24 jurisdictions, assistance units with three or more children did account for one in four (or more) of all traditional cases that closed. Most of these jurisdictions are smaller, more rural locales but two large metropolitan counties (Anne Arundel and Prince George's) are also in the group. The 11

counties and their proportions of large families are: Anne Arundel (25.8%); Caroline (25.3%); Cecil (28.1%); Harford (26.0%); Kent (25.8%); Prince George's (27.4%); St. Mary's (26.3%); Somerset (26.1%); Washington (28.9%); Wicomico (27.8%); and Worcester (27.8%).

In terms of ethnicity and age of payees heading traditional cases which closed during the study year, we find some similarities and differences across the state. Ethnic differences at least in part reflect population characteristics, but perhaps also some different exit patterns vis-à-vis child-only cases. In 14 jurisdictions, there were more African-American case heads in this year's traditional exiting cohort than members of any other ethnic groups. In seven counties (Allegany, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Garrett and Washington), Caucasians were the largest group among exiting payees and, in three counties (Caroline, Queen Anne's and St. Mary's) the size of those two ethnic groups was roughly the same. The only difference between

traditional and child-only cases on this variable is that, among child-only cases, Calvert County's exiting cohort was not majority Caucasian and Queen Anne's County did not have roughly equal shares of the two ethnic groups; African Americans predominated (60.0%) among that county's child-only exiting cohort.

Across the state, the youngest children in traditional exiting cases, on average, are between four and five years of age, the high ranging from 5.8 years and 5.7 years in Calvert and Queen Anne's Counties, respectively, to a low of 2.0 years. These are considerably lower than the average ages of the youngest children in child-only exiting cases where, statewide, the comparable figure was 9.1 years.

Last but not least, we report information about the extent of early childbearing among each subdivision's cohort of traditional exiting cases. There is little variation with regard to the mean or average age at first birth; in all 24 jurisdictions, this was between 21 and 23 years.

**Table 13. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (Allegany through Carroll Counties)**

	<b>Allegany</b>	<b>Anne Arundel</b>	<b>Baltimore County</b>	<b>Calvert</b>	<b>Caroline</b>	<b>Carroll</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	125	1,078	1,756	125	79	149
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	88.0%	86.6%	88.4%	93.6%	88.6%	87.9%
13 - 24 months	8.8%	11.0%	8.9%	3.2%	10.1%	10.7%
25 - 36 months	2.4%	1.8%	2.1%	1.6%	1.3%	0.7%
37 - 48 months	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Mean [Median]	6.4 [3.6]	8.0 [6.4]	6.4 [4.2]	6.3 [3.4]	5.9 [4.3]	7.2 [5.8]
<b>Mean [Median]Assistance Unit Size</b>	2.7 [3.0]	3.0 [3.0]	2.8 [3.0]	2.9 [3.0]	3.0 [3.0]	2.8 [3.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
1	87.2%	94.2%	96.3%	93.6%	93.7%	87.9%
2	12.8%	5.8%	3.7%	6.4%	6.3%	12.1%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	5.6%	4.5%	3.0%	2.4%	5.1%	7.4%
1	51.2%	41.4%	46.6%	44.0%	32.9%	43.0%
2	24.8%	28.3%	28.9%	29.6%	36.7%	32.2%
3 or more	18.4%	25.8%	21.5%	24.0%	25.3%	17.4%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	88.7%	38.8%	31.3%	56.5%	48.1%	86.2%
% African American	11.3%	59.2%	65.6%	40.3%	50.6%	10.3%
% Female	92.8%	96.5%	96.6%	93.6%	97.5%	89.9%
Mean Age [Median]	29.1 [26.4]	30.9 [29.6]	29.8 [27.5]	31.9 [31.3]	28.7 [27.4]	30.8 [28.9]
<b>Mean Age at First Birth [Median]</b>	22.0 [20.1]	22.0 [20.5]	21.9 [20.3]	22.8 [21.4]	21.2 [20.0]	23.7 [22.4]
% who gave birth before 18	17.0%	21.2%	20.3%	8.0%	26.7%	7.8%
% who gave birth before 21	58.0%	54.9%	56.0%	45.1%	61.3%	40.6%
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	4.3 [2.0]	4.9 [3.1]	4.3 [2.2]	5.8 [4.1]	4.1 [2.3]	4.6 [2.7]
% cases with a child under 3	59.0%	49.8%	56.9%	38.8%	59.7%	53.9%

**Table 14. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (Cecil through Harford Counties)**

	<b>Cecil</b>	<b>Charles</b>	<b>Dorchester</b>	<b>Frederick</b>	<b>Garrett</b>	<b>Harford</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	278	305	279	262	45	552
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	93.9%	84.6%	88.9%	88.9%	73.3%	84.9%
13 - 24 months	4.7%	10.8%	10.8%	9.9%	24.4%	12.0%
25 - 36 months	1.1%	3.6%	0.4%	1.1%	2.2%	1.3%
37 - 48 months	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
49 - 60 months	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Mean [Median]	5.5 [3.7]	7.6 [4.9]	6.4 [5.2]	6.0 [3.9]	8.0 [5.9]	8.1 [5.6]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	3.1 [3.0]	2.8 [2.0]	2.8 [3.0]	3.0 [3.0]	2.6 [2.0]	3.0 [3.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
1	91.0%	96.7%	93.9%	93.9%	93.3%	94.9%
2	9.0%	3.3%	6.1%	6.1%	6.7%	5.1%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	3.6%	3.9%	6.1%	3.4%	2.2%	2.0%
1	36.3%	47.2%	44.8%	41.2%	53.3%	43.0%
2	32.0%	27.2%	26.9%	31.7%	37.8%	29.0%
3 or more	28.1%	21.6%	22.2%	23.7%	6.7%	26.0%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	77.7%	29.4%	24.6%	55.3%	97.8%	44.1%
% African American	19.0%	67.9%	71.4%	38.9%	0.0%	51.5%
% Female	94.6%	95.7%	97.5%	96.9%	88.9%	94.9%
Mean Age [Median]	30.7 [29.6]	30.3 [28.5]	28.8 [27.3]	29.9 [28.0]	30.1 [26.1]	30.6 [28.6]
<b>Mean Age at First Birth [Median]</b>	22.0 [20.4]	22.1 [20.8]	21.2 [19.9]	22.3 [20.5]	22.4 [20.5]	21.9 [20.5]
% who gave birth before 18	18.6%	16.1%	22.2%	16.7%	12.8%	20.2%
% who gave birth before 21	55.7%	52.1%	62.7%	54.3%	53.8%	55.7%
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	5.0 [3.3]	4.9 [3.1]	4.7 [2.8]	4.2 [2.5]	5.3 [2.5]	4.6 [3.0]
% cases with a child under 3	47.0%	49.0%	51.3%	56.0%	50.0%	50.4%

**Table 15. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (Howard through St. Mary's Counties)**

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	St. Mary's
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	246	31	580	1,802	68	186
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	88.6%	93.5%	88.1%	74.1%	94.1%	71.5%
13 - 24 months	9.3%	3.2%	9.7%	17.9%	4.4%	22.6%
25 - 36 months	1.6%	0.0%	1.4%	4.9%	1.5%	2.7%
37 - 48 months	0.4%	3.2%	0.3%	1.8%	0.0%	1.6%
49 - 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	1.6%
Mean [Median]	6.0 [3.8]	5.5 [3.9]	6.5 [4.1]	11.2 [8.7]	5.2 [3.7]	11.6 [9.6]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	2.9 [3.0]	2.9 [3.0]	3.0 [3.0]	3.0 [3.0]	3.0 [3.0]	3.1 [3.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
1	94.7%	100.0%	96.9%	97.4%	82.4%	93.5%
2	5.3%	0.0%	3.1%	2.6%	17.6%	6.5%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	2.8%	0.0%	2.8%	6.4%	4.4%	1.6%
1	42.7%	45.2%	43.1%	40.4%	38.2%	41.9%
2	34.6%	29.0%	30.1%	25.8%	35.3%	30.1%
3 or more	19.9%	25.8%	24.0%	27.4%	22.1%	26.3%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	22.9%	35.5%	13.8%	3.2%	50.0%	48.4%
% African American	72.9%	61.3%	75.8%	94.4%	48.5%	50.0%
% Female	94.3%	100.0%	95.5%	96.4%	97.1%	93.0%
Mean Age [Median]	30.7 [29.2]	28.2 [27.8]	32.8 [31.6]	31.6 [29.7]	31.8 [31.5]	32.7 [31.8]
<b>Mean Age at First Birth [Median]</b>	22.5 [20.6]	21.3 [20.7]	23.5 [21.5]	22.5 [20.6]	22.5 [21.0]	22.8 [20.8]
% who gave birth before 18	20.8%	6.5%	13.5%	22.0%	11.3%	16.5%
% who gave birth before 21	54.0%	61.3%	44.5%	53.3%	50.0%	51.8%
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	4.6 [2.4]	4.1 [1.7]	5.1 [3.0]	5.1 [3.2]	5.7 [2.9]	5.8 [4.7]
% cases with a child under 3	55.0%	58.1%	50.4%	48.6%	50.8%	41.3%

**Table 16. Closing Case and Payee Characteristics by Jurisdiction: Traditional Cases (Somerset through Worcester Counties and Baltimore City)**

	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Talbot</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Wicomico</b>	<b>Worcester</b>	<b>Baltimore City</b>
<b>Number of Unique Closings</b>	111	46	239	407	71	10,538
<b>Length of Exiting Spell</b>						
12 months or less	77.5%	76.1%	90.4%	85.0%	87.3%	78.4%
13 - 24 months	18.9%	19.6%	8.8%	11.8%	8.5%	16.8%
25 - 36 months	1.8%	2.2%	0.8%	1.7%	2.8%	3.6%
37 - 48 months	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.8%
49 - 60 months	0.9%	2.2%	0.0%	0.7%	1.4%	0.2%
More than 60 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%
Mean [Median]	7.8 [5.2]	7.6 [4.5]	5.9 [4.5]	8.1 [5.9]	7.2 [4.0]	9.4 [7.5]
<b>Mean [Median] Assistance Unit Size</b>	3.0 [3.0]	2.7 [2.0]	3.1 [3.0]	3.1 [3.0]	3.1 [3.0]	2.9 [3.0]
<b>Number of Adults</b>						
1	91.9%	97.8%	94.1%	96.1%	100.0%	97.4%
2	8.1%	2.2%	5.9%	3.9%	0.0%	2.6%
<b>Number of Children</b>						
0	6.3%	6.5%	1.7%	2.7%	1.4%	4.1%
1	37.8%	47.8%	36.8%	35.4%	39.4%	43.5%
2	29.7%	23.9%	32.6%	34.2%	23.9%	28.1%
3 or more	26.1%	21.7%	28.9%	27.8%	35.2%	24.4%
<b>Payee Characteristics</b>						
% Caucasian	36.0%	45.5%	73.6%	28.1%	29.4%	5.5%
% African American	64.0%	50.0%	23.4%	69.9%	70.6%	93.9%
% Female	98.2%	93.5%	97.1%	97.5%	95.8%	96.2%
Mean Age [Median]	30.2 [28.1]	30.2 [27.7]	28.4 [26.9]	29.4 [27.4]	30.3 [28.1]	30.7 [28.3]
<b>Mean Age at First Birth [Median]</b>	22.0 [20.3]	22.0 [20.8]	21.7 [20.3]	21.4 [20.1]	22.1 [20.9]	21.4 [19.5]
% who gave birth before 18	21.0%	23.8%	19.1%	23.4%	18.5%	30.5%
% who gave birth before 21	58.1%	52.4%	57.8%	61.0%	53.8%	62.6%
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>						
Mean [Median]	4.9 [2.7]	5.0 [2.5]	2.9 [1.1]	4.3 [2.5]	4.1 [1.5]	5.4 [3.9]
% cases with a child under 3	50.9%	53.3%	73.2%	55.8%	61.4%	41.7%

## FINDINGS: REASONS FOR CASE CLOSURE

### Statewide

One of the main questions concerning welfare leavers, of course, is why they are leaving. To answer this question, we examine administrative case closure codes. Case closure codes are a set of pre-determined terms that welfare case workers assign when they close a case. These codes may not truly capture the whole picture of why a family left welfare. In particular, they tend to undercount exits for work. However, they are the only source of data that indicates the reasons why customers left welfare. In addition, an earlier study indicates that case closing reasons are associated with employment and recidivism of exiting payees, the two most important post-exit outcomes (Ovwigbo, Tracy, & Born, 2004).

Figure 3 illustrates major case closing reasons among all cases. The six reasons shown in the pie chart accounted for 92.4% of the all closures. Regardless of case type, “Work Sanction,” “Income above Limit,” and “No Recertification/No Redetermination” were the top three frequently-cited reasons. A little less than one quarter (23.0%) of all closed cases had “work sanctions” as the reason for closure, and more than one in five cases (21.5%) closed due to payee income level being above the eligibility criteria. Another one-fifth (21.3%) of all cases were terminated with the code “No Recertification/No Redetermination.”

In addition to the top three codes, “Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided” was recorded for one in six case closures. A small but not insignificant portion of cases were listed as closures with reason codes as “Not Eligible” (5.6%) and “Requested Closure” (5.2%). Overall, the most often-cited case closing code among all exiting cases between October 2004 and Septem-

ber 2005 was “Work Sanction” (23.0%), also known as full family sanction for non-compliance with work participation requirements. This is a slight increase from the previous year, in which we reported that sanctioning accounted for 19.5% of all case closure codes.

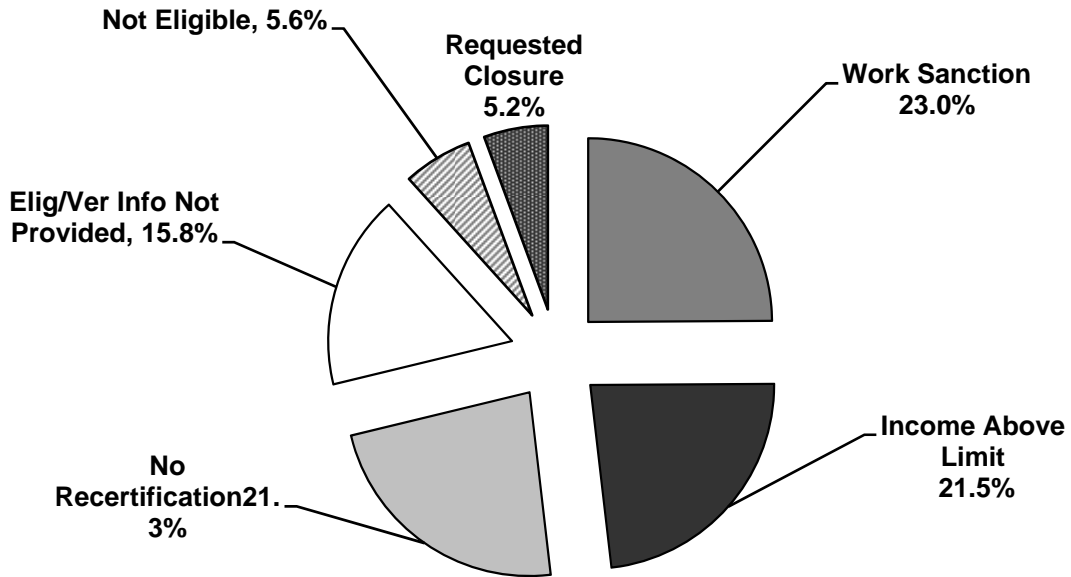
As mentioned earlier, child-only and traditional cases differ in terms of their demographic characteristics and the length of exiting welfare spell. Thus, we also examine the case closure reason separately for these groups. Figure 4, immediately following Figure 3, shows that the most commonly used administrative case closure codes vary between groups.

The left bar in Figure 4 shows the top three case closure reasons among child-only cases. For this group, “No Recertification” accounted for more than two in five (43.4%) closures. It was by far the most frequently-used closure code, followed by “Not Eligible” (16.6%). Another one-tenth of child-only cases were closed because customers requested closure (11.5%). It is important to note that closure reasons for child-only cases may reflect unique family circumstances. For instance, requested closures and ineligibility may indicate that children in those cases may have reached the age limit or had been reunited with their parents and no longer need assistance.

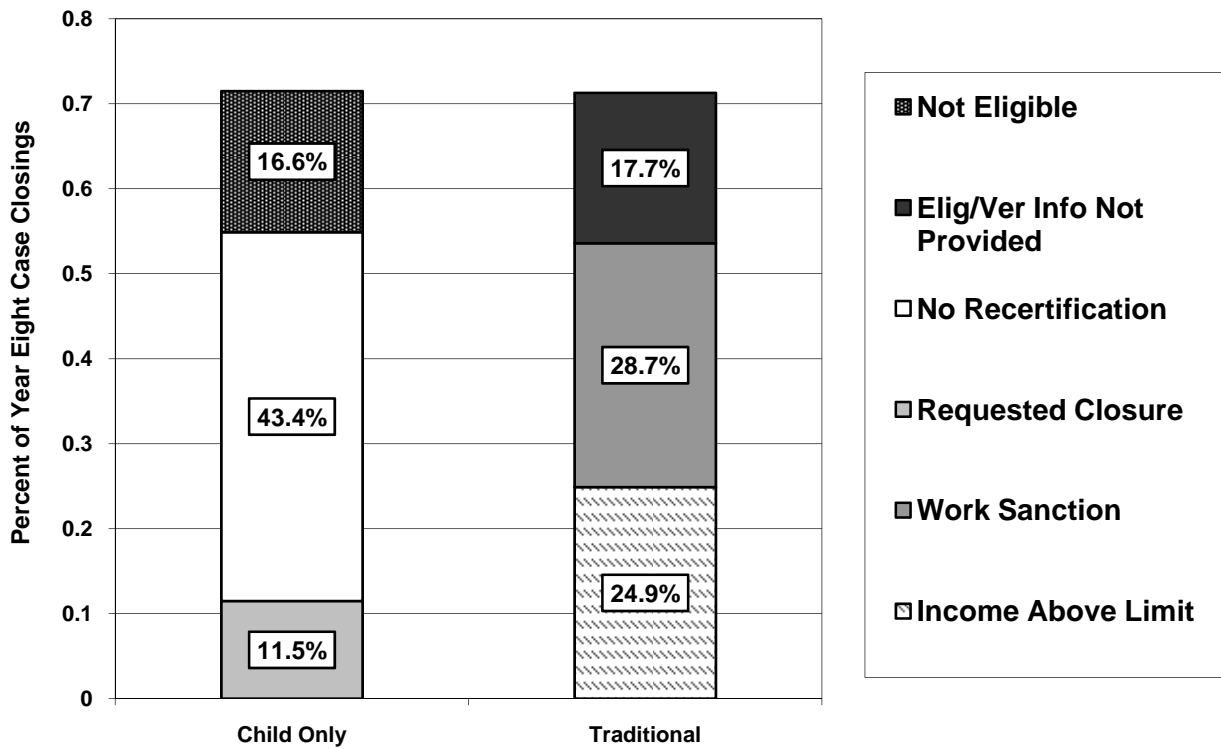
Compared to child-only cases, the right bar in Figure 4 indicates the top three closing codes that were used most commonly for traditional case closures. One quarter (24.9%) of these cases were closed because their income was above the allowed limit, making them ineligible for assistance. Another 28.7% of traditional case closures (28.7%) had “Work Sanction” as the case closure reason. Lastly, nearly one in five (17.7%) traditional case closures were because eligibility/verification information was not provided.



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



**Figure 4. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons: Child-Only vs. Traditional Cases**



## Jurisdictional Analysis

Tables 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 following this discussion, show case closing codes by jurisdiction. As seen in previous sections, different regions in Maryland have diverse populations and the needs of TCA customers vary. While all case closure codes are used across jurisdictions, there are variations in the frequency of certain codes. First, we examine the most frequently used case closure reasons across all cases, and then we discuss differences between child-only cases and traditional cases.

Looking across all case closures, Tables 17 through 21 reveal that “Work Sanction” and “Eligibility Verification info not provided” were the most widely used across all Maryland jurisdictions. Specifically, these were the two most common closure reasons in over two-thirds of the jurisdictions. In addition to these general trends, there are some noteworthy findings in specific jurisdictions. In Somerset County, “Whereabouts unknown,” not a top-three reason in any other jurisdiction, accounts for 13.3% of case closures. In addition, “Worker voided application,” which appeared among the top three codes in only two counties last year, ranked as the number one closing code in Baltimore County. Allegany, Anne Arundel, Frederick, and Prince George’s Counties all reported some proportion of case closures for this reason, ranging from 13.2% (Frederick) to 24.9% (Anne Arundel County).

Moving on to a comparison of child-only to traditional closures across jurisdictions, we begin with a summary of jurisdictional differences in case closure reasons among child-only closures. Nearly all jurisdictions in Maryland included “No recertification/no redetermination” (in 20 out of 24 jurisdictions) among the top three reasons for closure. Of these twenty jurisdictions, Allegany County reports the smallest proportion with 8.2%. The range goes up to 70.1% where Prince George’s County has the highest proportion of child-only cases closed due to “No recertification/no redetermination”. Other jurisdic-

tions such as Baltimore City, St. Mary’s County, and Anne Arundel County also had more than two in five child-only case closures recorded with the same reason. Ineligibility was also frequently used as a reason for case closure among child-only cases in most jurisdictions. In 19 of 24 jurisdictions, “Not Eligible” was found within the top three closure reasons. It ranged from 9.7% in Prince George’s County to 27.7% in Washington County. Across jurisdictions, the third most frequently used case closure reason among child-only cases was “Income Above Limit” appearing in 15 out of 24 jurisdictions; although child-only cases are not faced with work requirements, they can still have income via SSI or Social Security Survivor’s benefits for the children. In Kent County, one-third (33.3%) of child-only cases closed due to “Income above Limit”.

Finally, among traditional case closures, all jurisdictions but Prince George’s County included “Income above Limit” as one of the top three case closing reasons. In most localities, it was the number one reason for case closure ranging from 54.8% (Kent County) to 19.8% (Anne Arundel County). On average, one-third of traditional cases in most jurisdictions closed with the reason “Income above Limit”. Some counties had more than two in five closed cases (over 40%) that due to the customers’ higher income level (e.g. Calvert, Carroll, Garrett, and Howard Counties). In addition, “Work sanction” also came up frequently. Except for Anne Arundel, Carroll, and St. Mary’s Counties, it is consistently in the top three case closure reasons for traditional case closures in all jurisdictions. In Calvert and Worcester Counties, a little over one in ten cases had a closure reason of “Work sanction”. Other jurisdictions had at least one quarter of their cases closed as a result of a work sanction.

**Table 17. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons by Type and Jurisdiction (Allegany through Caroline Counties)**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>All Cases</b>		<b>Child-only</b>		<b>Traditional</b>	
<b>Allegany</b>	Income above limit	28.7%	Worker voided application	38.8%	Income above limit	32.0%
	Work sanction	20.7%	Income above limit	20.4%	Work sanction	28.8%
	Worker voided application	17.8%	Requested closure	8.2%	Requested closure	13.6%
<b>Anne Arundel</b>	Eligibility/verification info not provided	28.9%	No recertification/no re-determination	49.7%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	36.7%
	No recertification/no re-determination	24.9%	Not eligible	15.1%	Income above limit	19.8%
	Income above limit	17.1%	Requested closure	13.6%	No recertification/no re-determination	17.3%
<b>Baltimore County</b>	Income above limit	26.2%	No recertification/no re-determination	34.8%	Work sanction	32.9%
	Work sanction	24.7%	Requested closure	17.4%	Income above limit	32.0%
	No recertification/ no re-determination	16.1%	Not eligible	14.1%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	12.2%
<b>Calvert</b>	Income Above limit	44.0%	Not eligible	32.4%	Income above limit	49.6%
	Not eligible	15.7%	No recertification/no re-determination	26.5%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	12.8%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	10.1%	Income above limit	23.5%	Work sanction	11.2%
<b>Caroline</b>	Income above limit	27.5%	No recertification/no re-determination	23.3%	Income above limit	31.6%
	Work sanction	21.1%	Not eligible	23.3%	Work sanction	29.1%
	No recertification/ no re-determination	15.6%	Income above limit	16.7%	No recertification/no re-determination	12.7%

**Table 18. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons by Type and Jurisdiction (Carroll through Garrett Counties)**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>All Cases</b>		<b>Child-Only Cases</b>		<b>Traditional Cases</b>	
<b>Carroll</b>	Income above limit	36.3%	Requested closure	22.0%	Income above limit	41.6%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	17.9%	Income above limit	17.1%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	20.1%
	No recertification/ no redetermination	10.5%	Not eligible	14.6%	No recertification/no redetermination	10.1%
<b>Cecil</b>	Income above limit	27.6%	No recertification/no redetermination	33.8%	Income above limit	29.9%
	Work sanction	20.8%	Income above limit	19.5%	Work sanction	26.3%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	16.9%	Not eligible	15.6%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	20.9%
<b>Charles</b>	Income above limit	28.6%	No recertification/no redetermination	23.6%	Income above limit	31.8%
	No recertification/ no redetermination	19.2%	Not eligible	21.8%	No recertification/no redetermination	18.4%
	Work sanction	13.1%	Requested closure	18.2%	Work sanction	15.4%
<b>Dorchester</b>	Work sanction	26.3%	Not eligible	21.8%	Work sanction	31.5%
	Income above limit	22.8%	No recertification/no redetermination	16.4%	Income above limit	25.1%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	13.8%	Requested closure	14.5%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	13.6%
<b>Frederick</b>	Income above limit	34.0%	Requested closure	32.8%	Income above limit	38.2%
	Work sanction	17.8%	Not eligible	20.3%	Work sanction	22.1%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	13.2%	No recertification/no redetermination	20.3%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	15.6%
<b>Garrett</b>	Income above limit	41.7%	Income above limit	33.3%	Income above limit	44.4%
	Requested closure	16.7%	Requested closure	20.0%	Work sanction	15.6%
	Work sanction	1.7%	Not eligible	20.0%	Requested closure	15.6%

**Table 19. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons by Type and Jurisdiction (Harford through Prince George's Counties)**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>All Cases</b>		<b>Child-Only Cases</b>		<b>Traditional Cases</b>	
<b>Harford</b>	Income above limit	31.6%	No recertification/no re-determination	29.3%	Income above limit	38.0%
	No recertification/ no re-determination	16.4%	Not eligible	26.0%	Work sanction	17.9%
	Work sanction	14.1%	Requested closure	18.0%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	15.8%
<b>Howard</b>	Income above limit	37.9%	No recertification/no re-determination	30.0%	Income above limit	43.5%
	Work sanction	19.0%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	20.0%	Work sanction	23.2%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	14.7%	Income above limit	15.0%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	13.4%
<b>Kent</b>	Income above limit	50.0%	Income above limit	36.4%	Income above limit	54.8%
	Work sanction	14.3%	Not eligible	18.2%	Work sanction	19.4%
	Not eligible	9.5%	Residency	18.2%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	6.5%
				Not eligible	6.5%	
				residency	6.5%	
<b>Montgomery</b>	Income above limit	28.2%	No recertification/no re-determination	38.5%	Work sanction	34.7%
	Work sanction	24.8%	Income above limit	13.0%	Income above limit	34.5%
	No recertification/no re-determination	15.6%	Not eligible	13.0%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	12.4%
<b>Prince George's</b>	No recertification/no re-determination	36.8%	No recertification/no re-determination	70.1%	Work sanction	23.3%
	Work sanction	16.1%	Not eligible	9.7%	No recertification/no re-determination	21.6%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	15.3%	Requested closure	5.6%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	20.4%

**Table 20. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons by Type and Jurisdiction (Queen Anne's through Wicomico Counties)**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>All Cases</b>		<b>Child-Only Cases</b>		<b>Traditional Cases</b>	
<b>Queen Anne's</b>	Income above limit	32.5%	No recertification/no re-determination	26.7%	Income above limit	35.3%
	Eligibility verification info not provided	26.5%	Income above limit	20.0%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	30.9%
	Work sanction	15.7%	Requested closure	20.0%	Work sanction	19.1%
<b>St. Mary's</b>	No recertification/no re-determination	32.6%	No recertification/no re-determination	42.3%	Income above limit	31.2%
	Income above limit	27.3%	Income above limit	17.9%	No recertification/no re-determination	28.5%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	8.0%	Not eligible	12.8%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	11.3%
<b>Somerset</b>	Income above limit	32.4%	Requested Closure	32.0%	Income above limit	38.7%
	Work sanction	23.5%	No recertification/no re-determination	20.0%	Work sanction	28.8%
	Requested closure	13.2%	Not eligible	16.0%	Not eligible	9.9%
<b>Talbot</b>	Income above limit	25.3%	No recertification/no re-determination	24.3%	Income above limit	28.3%
	Requested closure	19.3%	Income above limit	21.6%	Work sanction	26.1%
	Work sanction	14.5%	Requested closure	21.6%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	21.7%
	Eligibility/verification info not provided	14.5%				
<b>Washington</b>	Income above limit	29.1%	No recertification/no re-determination	29.8%	Income above limit	35.6%
	No recertification/ no re-determination	21.0%	Not eligible	27.7%	No recertification/no re-determination	17.6%
	Requested closure	14.1%	Income above limit	12.8%	Work sanction	16.3%
<b>Wicomico</b>	Income above limit	31.1%	No recertification/no re-determination	33.3%	Income above limit	35.6%
	Work sanction	20.8%	Not eligible	23.4%	Work sanction	26.5%
	No recertification/ no re-determination	13.7%	Income above limit	14.4%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	14.0%

**Table 21. Top 3 Case Closing Reasons by Type and Jurisdiction (Worcester County and Baltimore City)**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>All Cases</b>		<b>Child-Only Cases</b>		<b>Traditional Cases</b>	
<b>Worcester</b>	Eligibility/verification info not provided	30.9%	Income above limit	21.7%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	33.8%
	Income above limit	20.8%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	21.7%	Income above limit	31.0%
	Work sanction	9.6%	Residency	17.4%	Work sanction	12.7%
			Requested closure	17.4%		
			Worker voided application	13.0%		
<b>Baltimore City</b>	Work sanction	28.0%	No recertification/no re-determination	43.6%	Work sanction	33.1%
	No recertification/ no re-termination	21.8%	Not eligible	19.5%	Income above limit	21.0%
	Income above limit	18.6%	Eligibility/verification info not provided	12.8%	No recertification/no re-determination	17.9%

## Full Family Sanctions: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

Generally speaking, imposition of sanctioning refers to the financial penalties for non-compliance with requirements of the TANF program (Bloom & Winstead, 2002). In the State of Maryland, full-family sanctions (meaning case closure) are issued when a customer is non-compliant with work participation requirements or fails to cooperate with child support enforcement. Although it seems severe, full-family sanctions are intended to encourage work participation, with the goal of getting cooperation and then reopening the case. Since the onset of welfare reform, there has been a consistent increase in case closures due to work sanctioning (Ovwigbo et al., 2005). The ninth year of welfare reform, featured in this report, shows a slight increase in work sanctions among exiting cases compared to the year before. Figure 5, following this discussion, illustrates the statewide jurisdictional rates of full family sanctions during our study period. A detailed table is provided in the Appendix.

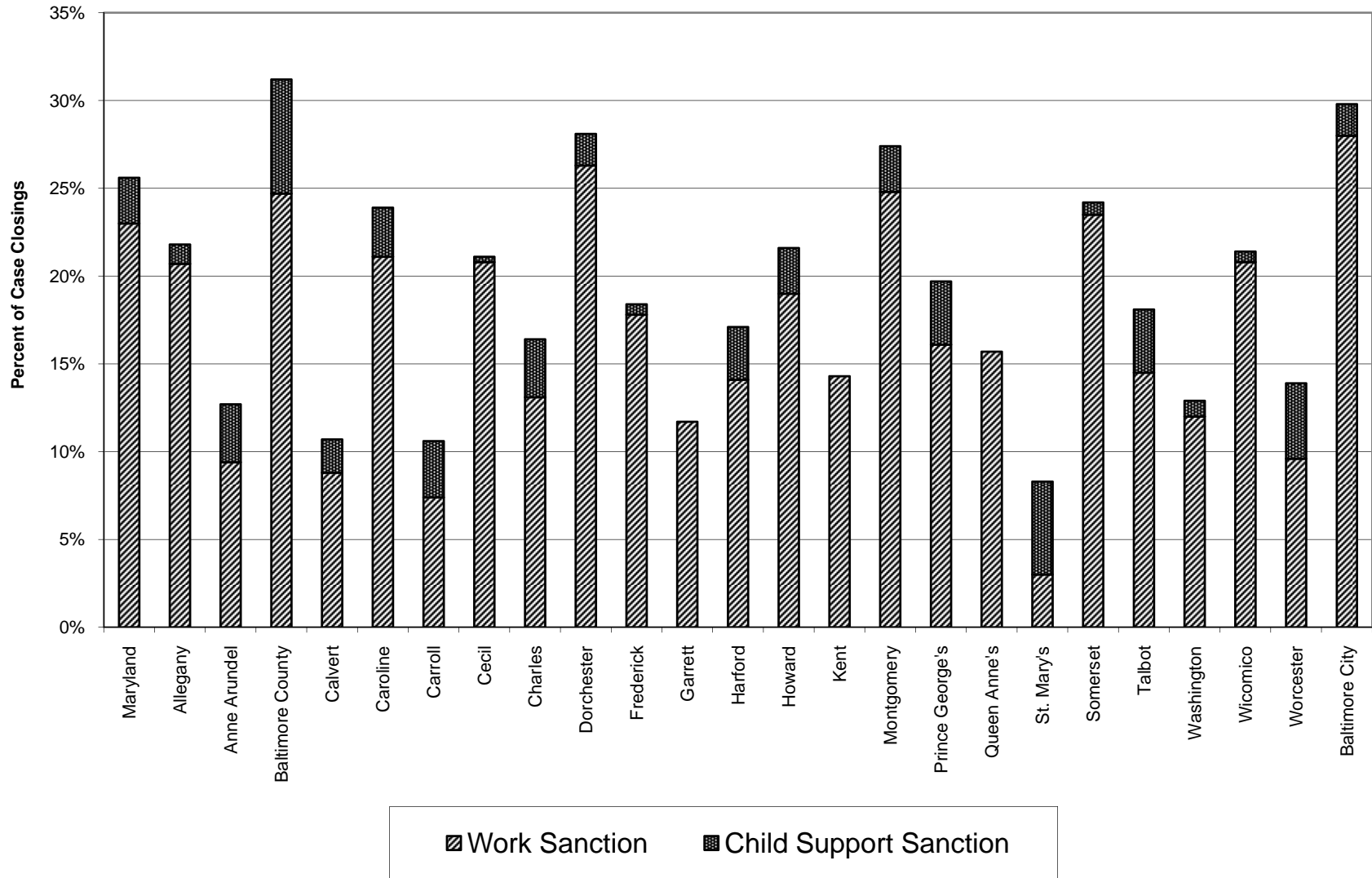
As seen in the left-most bar in Figure 5, (cases that closed between October 2004 and September 2005 statewide), a little over

one quarter (25.6%) of is closed due to a full-family sanction. Most were work sanctions, and only a small proportion was child support sanctions. In four jurisdictions (Baltimore County, Dorchester County, Montgomery County, and Baltimore City) at least one in four closures was due to a work sanction. Other localities such as St. Mary's, Calvert, and Carroll Counties report a relatively low proportion of full family sanctions (representing approximately one in ten closures). In terms of the type of full family sanction, Baltimore County and St. Mary's County had the highest proportion of child support sanctions (6.5% and 5.3%, respectively). Yet, some jurisdictions do not have any child support sanction as observed in Garrett, Kent, and Queen Anne's counties.

We also compared Figure 5 to the same analysis performed in the year before. We find some notable changes in Wicomico and Worcester counties. In Wicomico, the percentage of work sanction closures almost doubled from the year before, resulting in a 20.8% work sanction rate. On the other hand, Worcester County's work sanctioning rate significantly dropped—from 20.9% (eighth year) to 9.6% (ninth year).



**Figure 5. Full Family Sanctions**



## CONCLUSIONS

This report describes case closing patterns in the ninth year of welfare reform in Maryland. In sum, findings from the current study indicate the overall trends of welfare case closures have not changed dramatically over time. However, there are several notable jurisdictional differences in regard to case closing trends in the ninth year after welfare reform in Maryland.

In terms of examining the jurisdictional share of case closures relative to the active caseload, there is good news. Baltimore City's widening gap between the share of the active cases and closings in the eighth year of welfare reform (Ovwigbo et al, 2005) has been reduced in the ninth year. While Baltimore City still has more active cases than case closures, the gap was only -2.3 percentage points, up from -3.3 percentage points in the year before. Prince George's County also increased its share of the closing caseload, which is important, considering that Prince George's County has the second largest number of both active cases and closures.

These findings in two major metropolitan jurisdictions should be promising for program managers and policy-makers. They may relieve concerns about a concentration of welfare cases in urban areas, which in turn can create difficult obstacles for meeting work participation requirements and timely implementation of policies and practices (Ovwigbo et al, 2005).

Another important finding is the proportion of child-only cases among TANF leavers. Consistent with the recent trend of an in-

creasingly higher proportion of child-only cases in the active caseload, this report notes that a significant portion of case closures are child-only cases. Statewide, approximately one in five case closures are child-only cases. In this report, we also confirmed previous findings that child-only cases have a different profile than traditional cases. Specifically, child-only cases are more likely to have older payees, older children, receive assistance longer, and are less likely to leave for work-related reasons than traditional cases.

Along with the characteristics of exiting TCA cases, case closure reasons also receive substantial attention in this report. While case closing codes such as "Income above Limit" indicates positive trends for leavers, there are still customers who do not comply with work requirements, resulting in work sanctions. In the ninth year after welfare reform, the percentage of payees whose closure reason involves a work sanction has increased. This may at least in part reflect more rigorous and enhanced monitoring and reporting of customers' work participation requirements by LDSS and work program vendors.

In sum, this report has documented overall trends of case closures in the ninth year after welfare reform in Maryland. A steady source of administrative data combined with newly utilized analytical tools such as GIS allowed us to examine case closing patterns for all 24 jurisdictions. The *Caseload Exits* series will continue to report on-going progress of Maryland's welfare reform with emphasis on closed cases by producing yearly and multi-year studies in the future.

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APPENDIX: FULL FAMILY SANCTIONS, 10/04 – 09/05

**Table 22. Sanctions by Jurisdiction**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Work Sanction</b>	<b>Child Support Sanction</b>
Allegany	20.7% (36)	1.1% (2)
Anne Arundel	9.4% (133)	3.3% (47)
Baltimore County	24.7% (578)	6.5% (152)
Calvert	8.8% (14)	1.9% (3)
Caroline	21.1% (23)	2.8% (3)
Carroll	7.4 % (14)	3.2% (6)
Cecil	20.8% (74)	0.3% (1)
Charles	13.1% (47)	3.3% (12)
Dorchester	26.3% (88)	1.8% (6)
Frederick	17.8 % (58)	0.6% (2)
Garrett	11.7% (7)	0.0% (0)
Harford	14.1% (99)	3.0% (21)
Howard	19.0% (58)	2.6% (8)
Kent	14.3% (6)	0.0% (0)
Montgomery	24.8 % (203)	2.6% (21)
Prince George's	16.1% (421)	3.6% (94)
Queen Anne's	15.7% (13)	0.0% (0)
St. Mary's	3.0% (8)	5.3% (14)
Somerset	23.5 % (32)	0.7% (1)
Talbot	14.5% (12)	3.6% (3)
Washington	12.0% (40)	0.9% (3)
Wicomico	20.8% (108)	0.6% (3)
Worcester	9.6% (9)	4.3% (4)
Baltimore City	28.0% (3,494)	1.8% (227)
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>23.0 % (5,575)</b>	<b>2.6% (633)</b>