

Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The First Three Years of FIP

**Catherine E. Born
Principal Investigator**

**Pamela Caudill Ovwigho
Welfare Research Director**

**Melinda L. Cordero
Project Analyst**

December 2000

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

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

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

Table of Contents

List of Tables
List of Figures
Executive Summary

Introduction	1
Methodology	2
Findings	4
Closing Cases by Month and Year: Statewide Analysis	4
Closing Cases by Year: Jurisdictional Analysis	8
Closing Cases Relative to Caseload Size: Jurisdictional Analysis	10
Characteristics of Exiting Cases: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses	13
Length of Exiting Spell	13
Assistance Unit Size	15
Number of Adults	15
Number of Children	16
Child-Only Cases	16
Administrative Reasons for Case Closure: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses	27
Top Five Case Closing Reasons: Statewide Data	28
Top Five Case Closing Reasons: Jurisdictional Data	28
Full Family Sanctions: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses	34
Full Family Sanctions: Statewide Analysis	34
Full Family Sanctions: Jurisdictional Analysis	35
Conclusion	39

Appendix A. Map of Maryland

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. Number of Monthly TCA Exits: Statewide	6
Figure 1. Statewide Closing Cases By Month: Years 1, 2 and 3	7
Table 2. Number of Closing Cases by Year and Jurisdiction	9
Table 3. Percent of Total Closings/Caseload by Jurisdiction	12
Table 4. Case Characteristics	18
Table 5. Administrative Reasons for Case Closure	30
Table 6. Full Family Sanctions	37

Executive Summary

Maryland has one of the most comprehensive programs of state-initiated welfare reform research in the nation. Although we are best-known for our ongoing, large-scale, longitudinal study of welfare leavers, *Life After Welfare*, a number of other research initiatives are also being carried out on a regular, continuing basis. One of these is the *Caseload Exits* project which, through a series of annual reports, provides statewide and subdivision-specific descriptive information about the universe of cases which have exited cash assistance in Maryland. Three such annual reports have been issued, one for each of the first three years of reform: October 1996 - September 1997 (University of Maryland, School of Social Work, April 1998); October 1997 - September 1998 (Born, Caudill, Spera & Cordero, June 1999); and October 1998 - September 1999 (Born, Caudill, Kunz & Cordero, April 2000). The two broad questions addressed by the annual *Caseload Exits* reports are:

- " What are the statewide and jurisdictional trends in cash assistance case closings during the year?
- " For the state as a whole and in each local subdivision, what is the profile of cases which closed, what are the administrative reasons for case closure, and what are the patterns in terms of full family sanctioning?

Today's report draws on data contained in each of the first three *Caseload Exits* reports to provide comparative information over time, at the state and local level, about the trends related to the above questions. Key findings from this comparative review include the following:

1. The number of unique closing cases statewide was greatest in the first year of reform (n=41,212) and declined in each of the next two years (n=40,773 in year two and n=37,997 in year three).

2. Similarly, the largest number of statewide exits in any one month (n=4,093) was recorded in the second month of reform (November, 1996) while the smallest number of exits (n=2,619) was recorded in September, 1999, the 36th month of reform and the most recent month covered by these data.
3. In each of the three years, 23 of 24 jurisdictions closed at least as many cases as would have been expected given their share of the caseload. The notable exception in each year was Baltimore City whose share of closings fell short of its share of the caseload in all three years; the City's closings-caseload gaps were 17.1%, 11.7% and 3.8% in years one, two and three, respectively.
4. For the state as a whole, the profile of exiting cases was generally similar across all three years in terms of length of exit spell, assistance unit size, number of adults, number of children, and the proportion of child-only cases.
5. Sub-state profiles of exiting cases were generally similar, although there were a few exceptions, usually in smaller, more rural jurisdictions. For example, in the counties of Cecil and Garrett, in the second year of reform, there were slightly more three person than two person assistance units among the exiting population; in the 22 other jurisdictions, two person assistance units were most common.
6. Statewide in all three years, two administrative closing reasons predominated: income above limit/started work and failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process. Income above limit, the code used to reflect employment-related closures, was the #1 reason in the first two years of reform and the #2 reason in the third year. Failure to reapply/redet ranked second in each of the first two years and first in the third year of reform. These two reasons together accounted for about one of every two closures in the first and second years and for not quite three of five closures in year three.
7. Notably, in each of the three years, income above limit was the most common case closing reason in the vast majority of local subdivisions; it was the #1 reason in 22 of 24 subdivisions in the first and second years and the #1 reason in 20 subdivisions in year three. The exceptions were: Montgomery and Prince George's counties (year one); Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties (year two); and Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Prince George's and St. Mary's (year three).
8. Full family sanctions were used rather sparingly across the state during each of the first three years of reform although, as anticipated, the use of sanctions did increase over time. Also as expected, the vast majority of sanctions in all three years were for work, rather than child support, reasons. Statewide, sanctions accounted for 6.1%, 11.7% and 11.7% of closures statewide in years one, two and three, respectively.

9. At the jurisdictional level, sanctioning patterns during the three years were generally similar to those for the state as a whole. All subdivisions mirrored the state in that, in all three years, in all jurisdictions work sanctions were more common than child support sanctions.

10. Some sub-state differences were observed with regard to the proportion of cases closed because of a sanction; in general, counties with the highest proportions of work sanctions tended, in all three years, to be smaller, more rural jurisdictions.

The overarching conclusion suggested by this comparative review of data on the universe of Maryland welfare leavers during the first three years of reform is that exiting patterns and trends, including case characteristics, case closing reasons and the use of full family sanctions, have been generally consistent over time and across jurisdictions. In general, the number of cases closing each year has decreased slightly over time, during the entire study period the share of case closings closely parallels the share of the overall caseload in all but one jurisdiction (Baltimore City), the profile of exiting cases is not markedly different across the three years, work-related and reapplication/redetermination-related closure reasons predominate in all three years and full family sanctioning patterns (sparing use, primarily work-related) are generally consistent in all three years.

As would be expected in a state as diverse as Maryland, there are intra-state variations on many of the above dimensions, as can be seen in the data tables included in the body of the report. To the authors, none of the within-state variations observed in these data seem cause for great alarm. However, data on the first three years of reform, whether considered separately as in our annual *Caseload Exits* reports or together, as in today's report, do confirm that, at least in some respects, Baltimore

City's welfare reform experiences have not paralleled those in the 23 counties. The perhaps myriad reasons for this continuing situation cannot be ascertained from the raw data on the universe of welfare leavers and thus are beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, the City's disproportionate share of today's active cash assistance caseload (conservatively about three-fifths of the state total) and the fact of its different reform experiences to date, should not be overlooked. To ignore these realities as we go forward would be foolhardy: if for no other reason than sheer caseload volume alone, our state's continued success in welfare reform will depend heavily on actions taken and accomplishments achieved in Baltimore City.

Introduction

Since the enactment of federal welfare reform in 1996 (PL 104-93), and the implementation of Maryland's approach to reform, the Family Investment Program (FIP) in October of that year, we have issued annual *Caseload Exits* reports describing the universe of exits from Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) at the local level. In contrast to our *Life After Welfare* study which longitudinally tracks a 5% sample of families who leave welfare each month (see, for example, Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group, October 2000), the *Caseload Exits* report series looks at population caseload trends by examining the universe of unique closing cases in each year.

Three separate reports on the universe of Maryland welfare leavers have been issued to date, one for each of the first three years of reform (See University of Maryland, School of Social Work, April 1998; Born, Caudill, Spera & Cordero, June 1999; and Born, Caudill, Cordero, & Kunz, April 2000). Drawing on the data contained in each of those annual reports, today's paper briefly examines the trends in caseload exits across the first three years of reform.

Methodology

Looking at all cases which closed during the first three full years of welfare reform permits us to answer many questions of relevance to state and local officials. The main questions of interest in our annual *Caseload Exits* reports and in this summary comparison report are the same:

- " What are the general trends in case closings?
- " Do case closing patterns differ across subdivisions?
- " How does each jurisdiction's share of closings compare to its share of the overall average caseload?
- " What is the general statewide profile of all exiters and the profile in each subdivision in terms of assistance unit size, number of adults, number of children and length of the closing or exiting welfare spell?
- " What are the most common administratively-recorded reasons for case closure?
- " What proportion of cases, statewide and in each subdivision, left welfare because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work requirements or non-cooperation with child support?

To answer these questions, aggregate data on closing cases are obtained from monthly case closing extract files created from the administrative data systems of the Maryland Department of Human Resources. Two systems are used: Automated Information Management System/Automated Master File (AIMS/AMF) and its replacement, Client Automated Resources and Eligibility System (CARES). Both systems contain official records of clients' utilization of various public assistance and social service programs, including cash assistance, which are under the purview of the Department of Human Resources and local Departments of Social Services (LDSSes).

There are 24 LDSSes in the state - one in each of Maryland's 23 counties and in the separate, incorporated City of Baltimore.

In addition to providing raw data on the number of closing cases throughout the state, the extract files created from the administrative data systems also contain the following data which were used to construct the three annual reports and are presented in this report in comparative fashion:

- " Assistance unit size - number of individuals included on the grant;
- " Case composition - numbers of children and adults included on the grant;
- " Benefit begin and end dates - from which length of closing welfare spell is calculated.
- " Closing code - administratively-recorded reason for welfare case closure.

A closing case (or case closure), for purposes of our three annual reports, was defined as an assistance unit which, at least once during the 12 month study period, ceased receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefits (formerly AFDC). That is, we counted cases or families rather than closures per se. Thus, within each year, a family will only be counted once, even if they left and returned to welfare multiple times in the year. However, a family may be counted in each of the three years if they exited welfare at least once in each year.

Findings

The following results are based on the universe of unique closing cases in the first (October 1996 - September 1997), second (October 1997 - September 1998), and third (October 1998 - September 1999) full years of welfare reform in Maryland. These data sets include all assistance units which exited cash assistance (TCA) at least once during one or more of these 12 month periods. Descriptive findings are presented for the state as a whole as well as for each of the 24 local jurisdictions. Findings are presented in the following sections:

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

Closing Cases by Month and Year: Statewide Analysis

In the first year of FIP, (October 1996 - September 1997) 41,212 unique case closings were recorded. In the second year 40,773 unique case closings were recorded, a decrease of 1.1% from the first year. In year three, 37,997 unique case closings were recorded, a decrease of 6.8% and 7.8%, respectively, from years one and two.

In years one and two, the number of cases closing in each quarter fluctuated. In year one, there were 11,328 closing cases in the first quarter, 9,861 in quarter two, 10,641 cases in the third quarter and 9,382 in the fourth quarter. Second year results

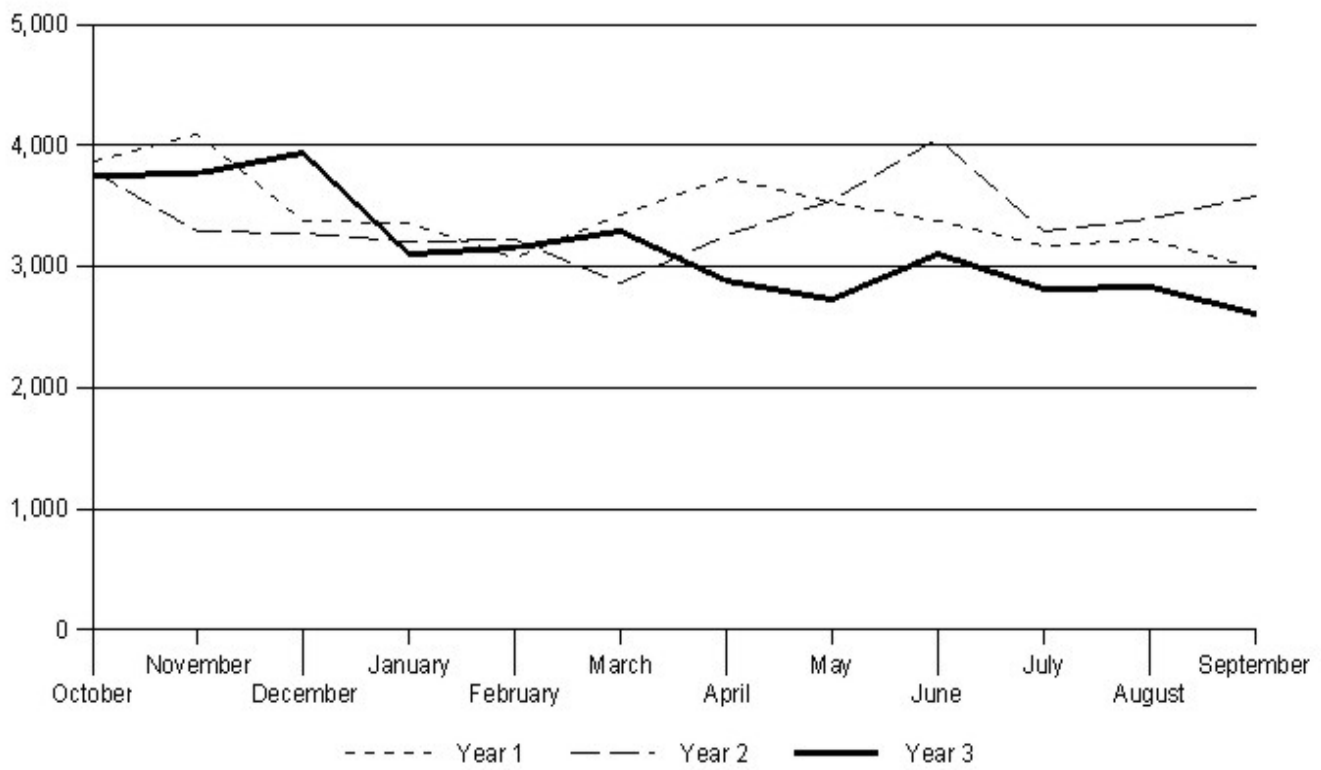
are similar, as illustrated in Table 1. In year three, however, quarterly exits showed a steady decrease from 11,457 cases exiting in the first quarter to 9,556 cases exiting in the second quarter, 8,722 in the third quarter, and 8,262 in the fourth quarter. Looking across the entire 36 month period, we find that the largest number of exits (n=4,093) was recorded in November 1996, the second month of reform. The fewest exits (n=2,619) were recorded in September of 1999, the 36th month of reform and the most recent month examined in today's report.¹ These results are shown in more detail in Table 1, following, which also provides statewide monthly exit totals for each of the three years. Figure 1, following the table, presents the monthly case closings graphically for all three years.

¹ This pattern of a declining number of exits does continue in subsequent months, based on universe data on exiting cases up to and including July 2000.

Table 1. Number of Monthly TCA Exits: Statewide

	Year One Oct 1996 - Sept 1997	Year Two Oct 1997 - Sept 1998	Year Three Oct 1998 - Sept 1999
October	3,864	3,786	3,750
November	4,093	3,294	3,773
December	3,371	3,276	3,934
<i>First Quarter Total</i>	11,328	10,356	11,457
January	3,357	3,201	3,107
February	3,069	3,223	3,150
March	3,435	2,870	3,299
<i>Second Quarter Total</i>	9,861	9,294	9,556
April	3,727	3,265	2,885
May	3,531	3,548	2,737
June	3,383	4,052	3,100
<i>Third Quarter Total</i>	10,641	10,865	8,722
July	3,173	3,292	2,817
August	3,217	3,387	2,826
September	2,992	3,579	2,619
<i>Fourth Quarter Total</i>	9,382	10,258	8,262
Annual Total	41,212	40,773	37,997

Figure 1. Statewide Closing Cases By Month: Years 1, 2 and 3



Closing Cases by Year: Jurisdictional Analysis²

The statewide trend of decreasing exits over the first three years is also evident in the individual jurisdictions. In 21 of 24 local jurisdictions, the number of unique case closings decreased steadily between year one and year two and again between year two and year three. The three exceptions, Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County and Baltimore City, exhibit two patterns. In Anne Arundel County, the number of closing cases increased 5.7% (from 1,948 in year one to 2,060 in year two) and then fell 36.9% (to 1,300) in year three. A similar pattern was found in Prince George's County, where exiting cases increased 2.2% from 7,002 in year one to 7,155 in year two but then decreased 22.5% to 5,842 in year three.

In contrast, and unique among all subdivisions, in Baltimore City the number of closing cases has steadily increased over time. The numbers of closing cases in the City were 13,840, 17,666, and 20,484 in the first, second and third years of reform, respectively. Table 2, following, presents the number of closing cases in each of the first three years of reform for each local jurisdiction.

² Readers unfamiliar with the geography of Maryland are referred to the state map included as an appendix to this report.

Table 2. Number of Closing Cases by Year and Jurisdiction

	Maryland	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll
Year 1	41,212	660	1,948	4,991	398	285	480
Year 2	40,773	418	2,060	4,368	313	203	321
Year 3	37,997	290	1,300	3,696	199	147	273

	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Frederick	Garrett	Harford
Year 1	674	867	489	827	211	1,059
Year 2	470	657	416	479	178	756
Year 3	312	407	270	385	163	537

	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George s	Queen Anne s	St. Mary s
Year 1	774	139	2,721	7,002	170	580
Year 2	456	70	2,083	7,155	129	415
Year 3	342	37	1,285	5,842	93	279

	Somerset	Talbot	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Baltimore City
Year 1	382	207	1,061	1,095	351	13,840
Year 2	224	125	640	911	260	17,666
Year 3	128	115	500	718	195	20,484

Closing Cases Relative to Caseload Size: Jurisdictional Analysis

The number of case closings occurring (or possible) in any local jurisdiction is largely a function of the size of its total cash assistance caseload. Because caseload sizes do vary dramatically, meaningful cross-county comparisons using literal numbers and proportions are difficult. However, in terms of caseload exits, one way to contrast localities which takes caseload size differences into account is to consider each subdivision's share of statewide case closings relative to its share of the statewide average annual caseload for the same period. This information appears in Table 3, following this discussion.³

For years one through three of reform, Table 3 presents the difference between percent of total caseload and percent of total closings accounted for by each jurisdiction. The table shows that in all three years, 23 of 24 jurisdictions closed at least as many cases as would have been expected given their share of the caseload. The notable exception is Baltimore City, whose share of total closings fell short of its share of the caseload in all three years.

In year one, Baltimore City accounted for about half (50.7%) of the caseload, but only about one third (33.6%) of the total cases closed. In year two, the situation improved somewhat. The gap between the City's share of the caseload (54.9%) and its share of closed cases (43.3%) was reduced from 17.1% to 11.6%. In year three, this gap narrowed quite markedly. Its share of the overall caseload in year three was

³ Caseload data were calculated by the authors from the *Monthly Statistical Reports* issued by the Family Investment Administration, Department of Human Resources for the period October 1996 - September 1999.

57.7% while it accounted for 53.9% of all closing cases, a gap of less than five percent (3.8%).

Table 3 also illustrates an important point about the active cash assistance caseload in the post-reform era. While we have made this point in prior reports, it is one that bears repeating. As welfare reform has unfolded, Baltimore City has come to account for an ever-larger share of the state's active caseload. As shown in Table 3, Baltimore City accounted for 57.7% of the statewide caseload during the third year of reform. In the second year, the City represented 54.9% of the state's active caseload, and during the first year of reform (October 1996 to September 1997) it accounted for just about half (50.7%) of the caseload. The obvious and very important implication of this trend is one that we have articulated in earlier reports: the state's continued success in achieving the goals of reform depends ever more heavily on results achieved in Baltimore City. A recent report by the Brookings Institution (Allen & Kirby, July 2000) shows that this situation is not unique to our state or Baltimore City. Rather the Brookings study shows that both phenomena, slower caseload decline, and increasing concentration of welfare cases, are true in most of the nation's large urban centers.

Table 3. Percent of Total Closings/Caseload by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Percent of Total Closings	Percent of Total Caseload	Difference	Percent of Total Closings	Percent of Total Caseload	Difference	Percent of Total Closings	Percent of Total Caseload	Difference
	Year One			Year Two			Year Three		
Allegany	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%
Anne Arundel	4.7%	4.2%	0.5%	5.1%	3.8%	1.3%	3.4%	3.5%	-0.1%
Baltimore County	12.1%	8.9%	3.2%	10.7%	8.9%	1.8%	9.7%	9.2%	0.5%
Calvert	1.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Caroline	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
Carroll	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%	0.1%
Cecil	1.6%	1.0%	0.6%	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.2%
Charles	2.1%	1.6%	0.5%	1.6%	1.3%	0.3%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%
Dorchester	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%	0.7%	0.3%	0.7%	0.8%	-0.1%
Frederick	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.2%	0.9%	0.3%	1.0%	0.9%	0.1%
Garrett	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%
Harford	2.6%	1.7%	0.9%	1.9%	1.5%	0.4%	1.4%	1.5%	-0.1%
Howard	1.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%	0.7%	0.4%	0.9%	0.7%	0.2%
Kent	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Montgomery	6.6%	4.6%	2.0%	5.1%	3.7%	1.4%	3.4%	3.3%	0.1%
Prince George s	17.0%	15.9%	1.1%	17.5%	15.6%	1.9%	15.4%	13.4%	2.0%
Queen Anne s	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Saint Mary s	1.4%	1.0%	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Somerset	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%
Talbot	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
Washington	2.6%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.0%	0.6%	1.3%	1.0%	0.3%
Wicomico	2.7%	1.8%	0.9%	2.2%	1.6%	0.6%	1.9%	1.7%	0.2%
Worcester	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Baltimore City	33.6%	50.7%	-17.1%	43.3%	54.9%	-11.6%	53.9%	57.7%	-3.8%

Characteristics of Exiting Cases: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses⁴

For each of the first three years of reform, characteristics of the universe of exiting cases are presented for the state and each jurisdiction in Table 4, which follows this discussion. Five characteristics describing exiting cases are presented: length of the TCA spell which culminated in the exit;⁵ number of adults in the assistance unit; number of children in the assistance unit; proportion of child-only cases⁶; and size of the assistance unit.

Length of Exiting Spell

Table 4 shows that, in all three years of reform, the vast majority of cases which left welfare statewide had been on assistance continuously for a relatively short period of time. In years one, two and three, respectively, 73%, 74%, and 81% of exiting cases had been open for two years or less at the time of exit. At the other extreme, in all three years, the proportion of long-term recipients (current spell of more than 60 months) was fairly constant; the proportions for the state as a whole were 7%, 7%, and 6% in years one, two and three, respectively. Readers interested in how a particular local subdivision's figures compare to these statewide data in any or all of the three years will find that information in Table 4.

⁴ Because of the disproportionate size of Baltimore City in terms of actual numbers of exiting cases, the table presents statewide data in two forms: with the City included and with the City excluded. References to statewide figures in the report text **include** Baltimore City.

⁵ Length of exiting spell refers, in this paper, to the continuous months of TCA receipt immediately preceding the closing of the case. Readers are alerted that variations in local case closing and/or redetermination practices during the study period may influence the observed results.

⁶ A child-only case is one in which no adult is included in the assistance unit (i.e., cash assistance is being provided only to the child or children).

Statewide, median length of exit spell fell slightly from 14 months in year one to 13 months in year two, and to 10 months in year three. In the majority of jurisdictions, median length of exiting spell followed the statewide trend over time, decreasing steadily between years one and three. However, in several smaller, generally rural, counties the patterns differed. In Calvert, Talbot, and Wicomico Counties, the median length of exiting spell increased slightly between the first and second years and then decreased between years two and three. In Dorchester, Kent and Worcester Counties, the median length of exiting spell decreased slightly between years one and two and increased between years two and three.

Another noteworthy finding with regard to median spell length pertains to Baltimore City. In all three years, the median length of exiting spell was notably higher in Baltimore City than it was in the balance of the state. In year one, the City's median exiting spell length was more than 6 months longer than the figure for the balance of the state. By year three the difference had fallen to slightly more than two months.

The distribution of cases of varying exit spell lengths is also different in the City than in the rest of the state. In the first year, just over one-third of City cases had exiting spells of 12 months or less (35%), compared to about half the cases (51%) in the rest of the state. Baltimore City also has at least twice as many long term cases (exit spell of more than 60 months) proportionally than the balance of the state in all three years. In years one and two, 18% of Baltimore City cases had an exit spell longer than 60 months, compared to only 7% of cases in the rest of the state. In year three the proportions changed, to 12% in Baltimore City and 6% in the balance of the state.

Assistance Unit Size

Statewide, closing cases in years one and two ranged in size from 1 to 12 persons; in year three the range was 1 to 13 persons. The most common situation, accounting for a plurality of cases in all three years, was that of a two person assistance unit. Next most common, statewide, in each year was a three person assistance unit.

Patterns with regard to assistance unit size among exiting cases were similar at the local level with only a few exceptions. Two person assistance units were most common in almost all jurisdictions in all three years. The first exception is that in year two, in the small rural counties of Garrett and Cecil, there were slightly more three person (32%) than two person (31%) assistance units (Cecil County) and more four person (32%) than two person (31%) assistance units (Garrett County). The second exception to the pattern was observed in Carroll County in year three; the jurisdiction had slightly more three person (37%) than two person (34%) assistance units in its population of exiters.

Number of Adults

Statewide, there was little variation across the three years in the proportions of exiting cases with one, two or no adults included in the assistance unit. Not surprisingly, cases with one adult predominated, accounting for 82%, 84% and 82% of all closing cases in years one, two, and three, respectively. In all three years also, there were far more cases with no adults on the grant (i.e., child-only cases) than there were cases with two adults. Proportions of the former were 15%, 13%, and 16% respectively in years one, two, and three; those for the latter were 3%, 3% and 2%.

The same pattern prevailed locally. In all three years, in all 24 local jurisdictions, assistance units containing one adult dominated among closing cases; in no subdivision did one-adult cases represent less than 60% of all cases. Notably, in all three years Garrett County had the highest proportions of two-parent exiting cases; the county's two-parent figures are 11%, 26%, and 24% for years one through three, respectively.

Number of Children

Nearly half of all closing cases statewide in each of the first three years of reform were ones in which only one child was included in the assistance unit (49%, 47%, 46%). Likewise, in all three years, for the state as a whole, about three in ten closing cases contained two children. Local patterns closely mirror the statewide data. In particular, one-child assistance units were the most common situation in all 24 jurisdictions in all three years.

Child-Only Cases

Child-only cases, those in which no adult is included in the assistance unit, have historically represented about 10% (in 1985) to 19% (in 1996) of the cash assistance caseload in Maryland and between 10% (in 1985) and 22% (in 1996) on average across the country (USDHHS, 1999).

A recent Lewin Group (Farrell et. al, 2000) analysis confirms these trends. The child-only TANF caseload, while not increasing in absolute numbers, has come to account for an increased proportion of the overall national TANF caseload. In 1998, almost one in four (23%) active cases was a child-only case nationwide, and the proportion of child-only cases in state AFDC/TANF caseloads ranged from 10% (in

Alaska) to 47% (in Alabama). This same report shows that Maryland's experience has been comparable; the proportion of child-only cases in our state's cash assistance caseload increased from 15% in 1994 to 23% in 1998.

In years one through three of welfare reform, respectively, our data show that, statewide, child-only families are represented in the universe of closing cases in the proportions of 15%, 13%, and 16% respectively. These proportions are higher than the statewide proportion of child-only cases in the active caseload in the years prior to reform (10%), but lower than the active caseload proportion in 1996 (22%), the year in which reform was implemented.

During the first three years of reform, the proportion of child-only cases among all exiters varied widely across jurisdictions as well as over time. In year one, among all exiters, the percentage of child-only cases ranged from 8% in Garrett County to 21% in Anne Arundel County. In year two, it ranged between 8% in Garrett County and 26% in Talbot County and, in year three, it ranged from 13% in Carroll County to 38% in Kent County.

Table 4. Case Characteristics

	Allegany		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	660	418	290
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	51%	66%	74%
13-24 months	17%	12%	13%
25-36 months	10%	7%	3%
37-48 months	6%	4%	3%
49-60 months	5%	2%	2%
more than 60 months	11%	9%	6%
Mean spell length (months)	25.71	20.79	15.97
Median spell length (months)	12.75	7.79	5.98
Range (months)	1 - 151	1 - 159	1 - 184
Number of Adults			
0	10%	15%	19%
1	81%	74%	75%
2	9%	11%	6%
Number of Children			
0	2%	3%	1%
1	48%	45%	49%
2	31%	29%	29%
3 or more	19%	23%	21%
Child-Only Cases	10%	15%	19%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	9%	16%	14%
2	41%	32%	40%
3	29%	28%	25%
4 or more	21%	24%	21%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.74	2.80	2.67
Median Assistance Unit Size	3.00	3.00	2.00
Range	1 - 12	1 - 12	1 - 8

Anne Arundel		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
1,948	2,060	1,300
48%	47%	64%
23%	24%	18%
12%	13%	7%
6%	7%	3%
3%	3%	3%
8%	6%	5%
22.92	22.12	16.88
13.71	13.26	8.94
1 - 143	1 - 155	1 - 167
21%	16%	21%
76%	82%	77%
3%	2%	2%
3%	3%	4%
46%	45%	47%
31%	30%	27%
20%	22%	22%
21%	16%	21%
15%	13%	18%
39%	38%	38%
27%	27%	24%
19%	22%	20%
2.60	2.70	2.62
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 12	1 - 10	1 - 10

Baltimore		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
4,991	4,368	3,696
55%	61%	66%
23%	20%	18%
9%	9%	7%
5%	4%	3%
3%	2%	2%
5%	4%	4%
19.38	17.20	15.29
11.83	10.98	8.03
1 - 145	1 - 156	1 - 284
17%	14%	18%
80%	82%	79%
3%	4%	3%
2%	2%	2%
51%	49%	48%
31%	30%	30%
16%	19%	20%
17%	14%	18%
12%	12%	14%
44%	41%	40%
27%	28%	27%
17%	19%	19%
2.57	2.63	2.61
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 12	1 - 11	1 - 11

	Calvert		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	398	313	199
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	64%	64%	71%
13-24 months	17%	18%	16%
25-36 months	7%	7%	2%
37-48 months	6%	5%	3%
49-60 months	2%	2%	1%
more than 60 months	4%	4%	7%
Mean spell length (months)	16.93	16.65	15.96
Median spell length (months)	8.81	9.96	7.76
Range (months)	1 - 150	1 - 161	1 - 170
Number of Adults			
0	11%	11%	15%
1	82%	81%	78%
2	7%	8%	7%
Number of Children			
0	1%	2%	4%
1	41%	51%	47%
2	32%	27%	29%
3 or more	26%	20%	21%
Child-Only Cases	11%	11%	15%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	8%	9%	13%
2	34%	42%	39%
3	30%	29%	28%
4 or more	28%	20%	21%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.93	2.73	2.67
Median Assistance Unit Size	3.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 7	1 - 9	1 - 6

Caroline		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
285	203	147
51%	64%	71%
21%	18%	11%
15%	6%	5%
6%	5%	4%
3%	2%	2%
4%	5%	8%
20.14	16.36	16.88
12.08	7.95	6.24
1 - 152	1 - 122	1 - 167
14%	19%	30%
82%	77%	69%
4%	4%	1%
2%	3%	6%
51%	44%	47%
28%	37%	34%
19%	16%	13%
14%	19%	30%
12%	14%	24%
43%	38%	39%
28%	29%	26%
17%	19%	12%
2.60	2.59	2.27
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 7	1 - 6	1 - 5

Carroll		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
480	321	273
66%	72%	74%
17%	13%	17%
6%	6%	6%
4%	3%	<1%
3%	2%	1%
4%	4%	2%
15.96	13.87	10.86
8.25	7.77	6.61
1 - 146	1 - 151	1 - 120
10%	16%	13%
86%	74%	79%
4%	10%	8%
3%	4%	3%
46%	44%	47%
28%	31%	36%
23%	21%	14%
10%	16%	13%
8%	13%	13%
41%	38%	34%
27%	26%	37%
24%	23%	15%
2.76	2.68	2.60
3.00	2.00	3.00
1 - 8	1 - 7	1 - 7

	Cecil		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	674	470	312
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	63%	71%	75%
13-24 months	17%	14%	16%
25-36 months	8%	7%	2%
37-48 months	6%	3%	2%
49-60 months	2%	2%	2%
more than 60 months	4%	3%	3%
Mean spell length (months)	16.91	13.12	11.20
Median spell length (months)	9.34	6.33	5.88
Range (months)	1 - 151	1 - 122	1 - 114
Number of Adults			
0	12%	11%	20%
1	81%	78%	73%
2	7%	11%	7%
Number of Children			
0	3%	3%	3%
1	49%	38%	46%
2	27%	35%	29%
3 or more	21%	24%	22%
Child-Only Cases	12%	11%	20%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	10%	10%	17%
2	42%	31%	37%
3	24%	32%	22%
4 or more	24%	27%	24%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.72	2.90	2.70
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	3.00	2.00
Range	1 - 7	1 - 8	1 - 9

Charles		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
867	657	407
49%	50%	63%
23%	22%	18%
12%	11%	5%
6%	7%	4%
3%	3%	3%
7%	7%	6%
22.79	22.05	19.09
13.31	12.14	10.48
1 - 151	1 - 163	1 - 170
11%	11%	20%
85%	85%	77%
4%	4%	3%
3%	3%	3%
48%	45%	46%
28%	27%	31%
21%	25%	20%
11%	11%	20%
10%	9%	16%
41%	39%	37%
26%	25%	28%
23%	27%	19%
2.76	2.83	2.64
2.00	3.00	2.00
1 - 10	1 - 11	1 - 8

Dorchester		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
489	416	270
70%	76%	71%
13%	12%	18%
6%	5%	4%
4%	2%	1%
2%	2%	2%
5%	3%	4%
15.66	11.77	13.95
7.02	5.85	6.85
1 - 151	1 - 155	1 - 149
10%	10%	14%
85%	87%	84%
5%	3%	2%
2%	2%	4%
45%	46%	46%
35%	32%	29%
18%	20%	21%
10%	10%	14%
10%	8%	11%
38%	42%	42%
33%	31%	29%
19%	19%	18%
2.69	2.70	2.62
3.00	2.50	2.00
1 - 8	1 - 8	1 - 7

	Frederick		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	827	479	385
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	58%	71%	77%
13-24 months	21%	14%	12%
25-36 months	9%	6%	2%
37-48 months	5%	3%	2%
49-60 months	3%	2%	2%
more than 60 months	4%	4%	5%
Mean spell length (months)	17.74	14.81	14.21
Median spell length (months)	10.03	8.15	6.47
Range (months)	1 - 233	1 - 289	1 - 299
Number of Adults			
0	13%	18%	21%
1	84%	78%	75%
2	3%	4%	4%
Number of Children			
0	2%	2%	2%
1	52%	50%	49%
2	29%	28%	31%
3 or more	17%	20%	18%
Child-Only Cases	13%	18%	21%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	10%	14%	17%
2	45%	40%	37%
3	27%	24%	28%
4 or more	18%	22%	18%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.60	2.62	2.54
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 7	1 - 7	1 - 7

Garrett		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
211	178	163
58%	75%	77%
18%	14%	14%
11%	4%	6%
3%	2%	1%
3%	2%	1%
7%	3%	2%
19.79	13.05	10.80
11.33	5.55	5.32
1 - 150	1 - 151	1 - 157
8%	8%	14%
81%	66%	63%
11%	26%	24%
3%	6%	4%
48%	44%	45%
26%	30%	31%
23%	20%	20%
8%	8%	14%
9%	13%	9%
38%	31%	34%
26%	24%	33%
27%	32%	25%
2.87	2.87	2.82
3.00	3.00	3.00
1 - 8	1 - 7	1 - 6

Harford		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
1,059	756	537
53%	58%	61%
22%	18%	22%
11%	11%	6%
6%	5%	5%
3%	4%	2%
5%	4%	5%
18.96	17.61	17.53
12.02	10.29	9.86
1 - 151	1 - 199	1 - 172
11%	14%	21%
84%	80%	75%
5%	6%	4%
2%	3%	2%
48%	49%	48%
28%	27%	29%
22%	21%	22%
11%	14%	21%
10%	12%	16%
41%	40%	38%
27%	26%	25%
22%	22%	21%
2.73	2.71	2.65
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 8	1 - 9	1 - 8

	Howard		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	774	456	342
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	51%	63%	72%
13-24 months	24%	18%	12%
25-36 months	12%	8%	6%
37-48 months	4%	5%	5%
49-60 months	3%	2%	2%
more than 60 months	6%	4%	4%
Mean spell length (months)	20.27	16.39	14.13
Median spell length (months)	12.94	8.79	6.88
Range (months)	1 - 141	1 - 132	1 - 129
Number of Adults			
0	10%	18%	21%
1	87%	80%	76%
2	3%	2%	3%
Number of Children			
0	2%	4%	4%
1	48%	46%	48%
2	29%	30%	29%
3 or more	21%	20%	19%
Child-Only Cases	10%	18%	21%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	8%	17%	19%
2	44%	36%	37%
3	28%	27%	26%
4 or more	20%	20%	19%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.70	2.63	2.53
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 9	1 - 7	1 - 7

Kent		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
139	70	37
67%	81%	62%
14%	10%	11%
8%	0%	8%
7%	2%	3%
2%	7%	5%
2%	0%	11%
14.74	10.12	19.35
7.56	5.60	8.05
1 - 141	1 - 58	1 - 81
16%	20%	38%
80%	77%	60%
4%	3%	3%
2%	6%	0%
47%	53%	59%
31%	26%	30%
20%	15%	11%
16%	20%	38%
13%	20%	24%
39%	40%	41%
26%	26%	30%
22%	14%	5%
2.66	2.36	2.22
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 6	1 - 5	1 - 6

Montgomery		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
2,721	2,083	1,285
47%	51%	66%
23%	18%	15%
11%	11%	6%
6%	7%	5%
4%	4%	3%
9%	9%	5%
23.73	22.70	16.50
13.94	11.96	7.42
1 - 145	1 - 156	1 - 166
13%	13%	18%
84%	83%	79%
3%	4%	3%
2%	2%	2%
44%	40%	46%
30%	32%	28%
24%	26%	24%
13%	13%	18%
10%	9%	13%
38%	36%	38%
29%	30%	26%
23%	25%	23%
2.77	2.88	2.74
3.00	3.00	2.00
1 - 9	1 - 10	1 - 11

	Prince George's		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	7,002	7,155	5,842
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	43%	43%	53%
13-24 months	25%	24%	22%
25-36 months	13%	12%	8%
37-48 months	7%	7%	5%
49-60 months	4%	5%	3%
more than 60 months	8%	9%	8%
Mean spell length (months)	24.59	24.59	21.21
Median spell length (months)	15.94	14.99	11.34
Range (months)	1 - 148	1 - 160	1 - 171
Number of Adults			
0	14%	13%	20%
1	84%	85%	78%
2	2%	2%	2%
Number of Children			
0	2%	3%	3%
1	48%	44%	45%
2	29%	29%	27%
3 or more	21%	24%	25%
Child-Only Cases	14%	13%	20%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	11%	11%	15%
2	42%	40%	37%
3	27%	26%	24%
4 or more	20%	23%	24%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.69	2.76	2.73
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 10	1 - 12	1 - 11

Queen Anne's		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
170	129	93
55%	74%	75%
22%	9%	15%
9%	5%	5%
6%	7%	1%
3%	1%	0%
5%	4%	3%
20.05	13.93	11.72
11.76	6.90	6.11
1 - 150	1 - 109	1 - 158
9%	22%	19%
84%	67%	73%
7%	11%	8%
1%	4%	3%
55%	61%	56%
23%	22%	25%
21%	13%	16%
9%	22%	19%
8%	22%	18%
47%	41%	41%
23%	22%	25%
22%	15%	16%
2.66	2.39	2.55
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 6	1 - 6	1 - 7

St. Mary's		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
580	415	279
50%	48%	67%
26%	22%	17%
9%	13%	4%
7%	7%	4%
2%	3%	3%
6%	7%	6%
20.97	21.65	17.41
12.97	13.19	9.33
1 - 149	1 - 157	1 - 176
12%	13%	24%
82%	81%	72%
6%	6%	4%
2%	4%	3%
45%	44%	50%
33%	28%	25%
20%	24%	22%
12%	13%	24%
9%	9%	16%
40%	39%	42%
30%	29%	21%
21%	23%	21%
2.77	2.76	2.59
3.00	3.00	2.00
1 - 8	1 - 7	1 - 7

	Somerset		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	382	224	128
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	51%	58%	73%
13-24 months	19%	16%	16%
25-36 months	13%	7%	3%
37-48 months	7%	5%	2%
49-60 months	4%	4%	2%
more than 60 months	6%	10%	3%
Mean spell length (months)	20.79	21.86	12.70
Median spell length (months)	12.46	9.02	6.31
Range (months)	1 - 142	1 - 156	1 - 175
Number of Adults			
0	10%	14%	23%
1	85%	80%	70%
2	5%	6%	8%
Number of Children			
0	2%	2%	2%
1	47%	50%	49%
2	29%	28%	27%
3 or more	22%	20%	23%
Child-Only Cases	10%	14%	23%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	8%	12%	17%
2	41%	42%	38%
3	28%	24%	22%
4 or more	23%	22%	24%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.74	2.68	2.64
Median Assistance Unit Size	3.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 10	1 - 8	1 - 8

Talbot		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
207	125	115
65%	70%	75%
16%	15%	10%
9%	2%	6%
4%	9%	3%
3%	2%	4%
3%	2%	4%
14.91	13.08	14.03
7.14	7.39	5.62
1 - 104	1 - 66	1 - 152
17%	26%	25%
81%	69%	70%
2%	5%	5%
2%	2%	4%
46%	54%	51%
31%	29%	30%
21%	15%	15%
17%	26%	25%
16%	19%	20%
34%	44%	38%
30%	22%	27%
20%	15%	15%
2.64	2.45	2.47
3.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 8	1 - 7	1 - 7

Washington		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
1,061	640	500
58%	77%	78%
20%	14%	12%
9%	4%	4%
4%	1%	2%
2%	2%	1%
7%	2%	3%
18.72	11.15	12.21
9.73	5.73	5.49
1 - 237	1 - 154	1 - 235
11%	13%	16%
85%	81%	80%
4%	6%	5%
3%	5%	5%
49%	49%	46%
30%	26%	27%
18%	20%	22%
11%	13%	16%
10%	13%	14%
42%	40%	38%
28%	25%	25%
20%	22%	23%
2.69	2.68	2.68
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 10	1 - 9	1 - 7

	Wicomico		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	1,095	911	718
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	66%	59%	71%
13-24 months	19%	18%	16%
25-36 months	8%	10%	4%
37-48 months	3%	6%	2%
49-60 months	1%	3%	3%
more than 60 months	3%	4%	4%
Mean spell length (months)	14.30	17.30	13.85
Median spell length (months)	8.06	8.72	6.47
Range (months)	1 - 151	1 - 167	1 - 176
Number of Adults			
0	11%	14%	16%
1	85%	81%	81%
2	4%	5%	3%
Number of Children			
0	2%	4%	5%
1	47%	41%	42%
2	31%	34%	32%
3 or more	20%	21%	21%
Child-Only Cases	11%	14%	16%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	9%	11%	14%
2	42%	37%	37%
3	29%	31%	28%
4 or more	20%	21%	21%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.70	2.75	2.67
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	3.00	2.00
Range	1 - 7	1 - 8	1 - 10

Worcester		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
351	260	195
66%	74%	83%
20%	11%	6%
7%	5%	4%
3%	4%	2%
1%	1%	1%
3%	5%	5%
14.30	13.48	11.87
7.33	5.19	5.46
1 - 154	1 - 151	1 - 169
11%	12%	15%
87%	85%	80%
2%	3%	5%
2%	3%	4%
47%	46%	56%
28%	30%	24%
23%	21%	17%
11%	12%	15%
11%	10%	13%
39%	40%	47%
29%	29%	25%
21%	21%	15%
2.72	2.70	2.50
3.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 8	1 - 7	1 - 7

	Baltimore City		
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Number of Closing Cases (Unique)	13,840	17,666	20,484
Length of Exiting Spell			
12 months or less	35%	37%	55%
13-24 months	23%	22%	17%
25-36 months	12%	11%	7%
37-48 months	7%	7%	4%
49-60 months	5%	5%	3%
more than 60 months	18%	18%	12%
Mean spell length (months)	35.80	35.22	26.42
Median spell length (months)	19.43	18.07	11.11
Range (months)	1 - 417	1 - 429	1 - 312
Number of Adults			
0	19%	13%	14%
1	80%	86%	85%
2	1%	1%	1%
Number of Children			
0	3%	3%	4%
1	50%	48%	46%
2	29%	29%	28%
3 or more	18%	20%	23%
Child-Only Cases	19%	13%	14%
Size of Assistance Unit			
1	13%	11%	12%
2	44%	43%	40%
3	26%	27%	27%
4 or more	17%	19%	22%
Mean Assistance Unit Size	2.54	2.66	2.71
Median Assistance Unit Size	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1 - 11	1 - 11	1 - 13

Maryland With Baltimore City		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
41,212	40,773	37,997
46%	47%	59%
23%	21%	18%
11%	11%	7%
6%	6%	4%
4%	4%	3%
10%	11%	9%
26.12	26.67	22.18
14.40	13.08	9.96
1 - 417	1 - 429	1 - 312
15%	13%	16%
82%	84%	82%
3%	3%	2%
2%	3%	3%
49%	47%	46%
30%	29%	29%
19%	21%	22%
15%	13%	16%
12%	11%	13%
42%	41%	39%
27%	27%	26%
19%	21%	21%
2.63	2.70	2.69
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 12	1 - 12	1 - 13

Maryland Without Baltimore City		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
27,369	23,107	17,513
51%	54%	63%
22%	20%	18%
11%	10%	7%
6%	6%	4%
3%	3%	2%
7%	7%	6%
21.13	20.15	17.22
12.62	11.53	8.84
1 - 237	1 - 289	1 - 299
14%	14%	19%
83%	82%	78%
3%	4%	3%
2%	3%	3%
48%	45%	46%
30%	30%	29%
20%	22%	22%
14%	14%	19%
11%	11%	15%
42%	39%	38%
27%	27%	26%
20%	23%	21%
2.68	2.73	2.66
2.00	2.00	2.00
1 - 12	1 - 12	1 - 11

Administrative Reasons for Case Closure: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

Families leave cash assistance for reasons that are often multi-faceted, complex and idiosyncratic. In contrast and of necessity, case closing reasons which can be captured via a computerized information system (in this instance AIMS/AMF and CARES) are of the highly structured, forced-choice variety. Thus, our presentation of data describing the administratively-recorded reasons for TCA case closure **must** be interpreted with great caution for they do not always reflect the complicated realities of clients' lives or the reason(s) why customers leave TCA. In our longitudinal study, *Life After Welfare*, to illustrate, we consistently find that far more clients leave welfare because they have found employment than are shown in the administrative data as exiting for this reason.

These very important caveats about the administrative data notwithstanding, it is still informative to examine the recorded case closing reasons for the universe of TCA cases closing during the first three years of reform. Table 5, following this discussion, presents comparative data for all three years for the state as a whole and for each local subdivision.⁷

⁷The table and text focus on the top five closing reasons because, for the state as a whole, the top five reasons account for the large majority of closures in all three years. The percentages, for years one through three, respectively, are: 77.9%, 81.8% and 86.0%.

Top Five Case Closing Reasons: Statewide Data

Statewide, in all three years, two reasons were most common: income above limit and failure to reapply/complete the redetermination process. The former ranked number one in years one and two, while the latter was the top-ranked reason in reform's third year. The data also show that, over time, these two reasons have come to account for a larger share of all exits. In the first year, these two reasons together accounted for about half (49.8%) of all closures; in year two the proportion was nearly identical (49.3%) and in year three the proportion was 57.6%.⁸ Statewide, case closure at the request of the client was also among the top five reasons in all three years; case closure due to the imposition of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work requirements appeared on the top five list in two of the three years (years two and three).

Top Five Case Closing Reasons: Jurisdictional Data⁹

In each of the first three years, the most common reason for closure - in the vast majority of jurisdictions - was that the family's income was above limit.¹⁰ Income above

⁸Much of the increase between years two and three occurred in use of the redet closing code, particularly in Baltimore City and Prince George's County, both of which experimented with a four month redetermination cycle during the study period. These two subdivisions together accounted for more than eight of every 10 cases closed for this reason in year three (n=10,725/12,959 or 82.8% of all such closures).

⁹Readers must remember that for half of the period covered by these data (October 1996 through March 1998), two separate computer systems (AIMS/AMF and CARES) with slightly different closing codes, were in use throughout the state. This fact makes cross-jurisdictional comparisons difficult, especially since the largest jurisdiction (Baltimore City) was the last to convert to the new system in March 1998.

¹⁰ "Income Above Limit" is the CARES code used to reflect an employment-related closure, "Stated Work" is the comparable old (AIMS/AMF) code. Since all 24

limit was the most common closing code in 22 of 24¹¹ subdivisions in year one, in 22 of 24 in year two and 20 of 24 in year three. More detailed information for each local subdivision for each of the first three years of reform, can be found in Table 5 on the following pages.

jurisdictions are now using CARES and have been since March 1998, we have combined these two codes for purposes of this analysis. Thus, the top five case closing reasons data shown here will not exactly match the data shown in previous annual reports.

¹¹ The exceptions were: Montgomery and Prince George's Counties (year one); Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties (year two); and Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties (year three).

Table 5. Administrative Reasons for Case Closure¹²

	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year One	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Two	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Three	Percent
Allegany	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Work Sanction Eligibility Assistance Unit Moved	40.4% (255) 22.5% (142) 9.8% (62) 9.2% (58) 4.6% (29)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved Eligibility	43.1% (180) 19.6% (82) 16.7% (70) 7.7% (32) 6.2% (26)	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Work Sanction Eligibility No Eligible Child	39.7% (115) 16.2% (47) 14.8% (43) 6.2% (18) 4.8% (14)
Anne Arundel	Income Above Limit Redetermination Requested Closure Eligibility Whereabouts Unk	28.2% (542) 22.8% (438) 13.9% (268) 6.7% (129) 5.5% (105)	Eligibility Redetermination Income Above Limit Work Sanction Assistance Unit Moved	29.2% (600) 22.4% (461) 20.4% (420) 12.3% (252) 4.9% (101)	Eligibility Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction No Eligible Child	31.1% (402) 20.9% (270) 17.9% (231) 13.2% (170) 4.3% (56)
Baltimore County	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure	21.8% (1,059) 21.4% (1,039) 11.7% (569) 10.0% (485) 7.3% (353)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Eligibility Assistance Unit Moved	29.4% (1,283) 19.1% (834) 17.7% (773) 13.1% (569) 7.0% (305)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure	28.4% (1,048) 26.3% (969) 16.6% (613) 12.1% (445) 4.7% (175)
Calvert	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Redetermination Eligibility Requested Closure	43.1% (163) 15.9% (60) 10.3% (39) 9.5% (36) 6.3% (24)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Redetermination Eligibility Assistance Unit Moved	40.6% (127) 22.0% (69) 10.9% (34) 9.9% (31) 5.8% (18)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Eligibility Redetermination Requested Closure	38.7% (77) 15.1% (30) 14.1% (28) 11.1% (22) 7.5% (15)
Caroline	Income Above Limit Redetermination Requested Closure No Dependent Child Work Sanction	46.4% (124) 19.1% (51) 7.9% (21) 6.4% (17) 6.0% (16)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Redetermination Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved	49.3% (99) 15.9% (32) 10.4% (21) 10.0% (20) 9.0% (18)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Requested Closure Residency	39.5% (58) 16.3% (24) 10.2% (15) 8.8% (13) 6.8% (10)

¹² Note: Eligibility = Failure to Provide Eligibility Information; Redetermination = Failure to Reapply/Complete Redetermination; Requested Closure = Assistance Unit Requested Closure. For the first two years, the "started work" AIMS code and the "income above limit" CARES code have been combined for jurisdictions which had not yet converted to CARES. Therefore, in some jurisdictions the top five case closing reasons may not match previous reports.

	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year One	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Two	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Three	Percent
Carroll	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Eligibility Redetermination Work Sanction	32.9% (154) 22.9% (107) 10.0% (47) 7.9% (37) 7.3% (34)	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Work Sanction Eligibility Redetermination	30.1% (96) 17.6% (56) 13.2% (42) 11.9% (38) 9.1% (29)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure Child Support Sanction	39.6% (108) 22.3% (61) 11.7% (32) 11.0% (30) 2.6% (7)
Cecil	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction Redetermination	38.1% (244) 18.0% (115) 11.4% (73) 10.8% (69) 6.4% (41)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved	39.6% (186) 17.9% (84) 16.4% (77) 8.1% (38) 7.2% (34)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Work Sanction Requested Closure	29.8% (93) 15.4% (48) 14.4% (45) 13.1% (41) 9.3% (29)
Charles	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Eligibility Redetermination Requested Closure	39.5% (325) 17.1% (141) 10.9% (90) 10.9% (90) 5.8% (48)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure	34.9% (229) 18.4% (121) 12.8% (84) 12.0% (79) 5.8% (38)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction No Eligible Child	29.0% (118) 28.3% (115) 10.1% (41) 9.3% (38) 8.8% (36)
Dorchester	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction Assistance Unit Moved	43.9% (204) 18.1% (84) 13.8% (64) 7.3% (34) 6.0% (28)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved Redetermination	34.2% (142) 19.8% (82) 16.6% (69) 10.8% (45) 7.0% (29) 7.0% (29)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Redetermination Requested Closure Eligibility	32.6% (88) 19.6% (53) 13.0% (35) 11.5% (31) 10.7% (29)
Frederick	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction	46.1% (362) 12.1% (95) 11.7% (92) 10.4% (82) 7.5% (59)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Assistance Unit Moved Work Sanction	42.9% (205) 13.8% (66) 10.0% (48) 9.8% (47) 9.6% (46)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction No Eligible Child	42.3% (163) 14.0% (54) 10.6% (41) 9.9% (38) 8.8% (34)
Garrett	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Work Sanction No Eligible Members Eligibility	49.7% (99) 16.1% (32) 12.6% (25) 5.5% (11) 4.0% (8)	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Work Sanction Assistance Unit Moved Eligibility	45.2% (80) 11.9% (21) 10.2% (18) 10.2% (18) 9.0% (16)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Requested Closure No Eligible Child No Eligible Members	44.2% (72) 14.7% (24) 9.8% (16) 6.1% (10) 5.5% (9)
Harford	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Requested Closure Work Sanction	43.6% (443) 17.2% (175) 9.6% (97) 8.7% (88) 7.5% (76)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved	42.1% (318) 15.9% (120) 13.2% (100) 8.1% (61) 7.5% (57)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility No Eligible Child Requested Closure	37.8% (203) 19.0% (102) 13.8% (74) 7.6% (41) 7.1% (38)

	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year One	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Two	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Three	Percent
Howard	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure	33.9% (251) 26.5% (196) 13.4% (99) 9.2% (68) 6.5% (48)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Requested Closure Eligibility	31.6% (144) 26.6% (121) 10.8% (49) 10.1% (46) 9.0% (41)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction Redetermination Requested Closure	40.1% (137) 13.2% (45) 12.9% (44) 10.8% (37) 7.9% (27)
Kent	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction Redetermination	44.7% (59) 15.2% (20) 11.4% (15) 8.3% (11) 6.1% (8)	Income Above Limit Assistance Unit Moved Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure Redetermination	57.1% (40) 11.4% (8) 8.6% (6) 4.3% (3) 4.3% (3) 4.3% (3)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction Child Support Sanction Redetermination	45.9% (17) 13.5% (5) 8.1% (3) 5.4% (2) 5.4% (2) 5.4% (2)
Montgomery	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure You Have Moved	30.9% (786) 30.6% (776) 17.9% (455) 6.2% (157) 3.1% (78)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	31.6% (656) 27.7% (575) 15.0% (312) 5.3% (109) 5.0% (104)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	36.4% (467) 21.1% (270) 12.6% (162) 6.5% (83) 6.5% (83)
Prince George s	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Whereabouts Unk	34.0% (2,315) 15.4% (1,052) 9.8% (669) 9.2% (629) 6.5% (442)	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction Assistance Unit Moved	39.0% (2,785) 20.7% (1,476) 11.5% (822) 9.9% (704) 4.7% (339)	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction Child Support Sanction	45.8% (2,670) 17.7% (1,035) 9.2% (539) 8.1% (475) 4.8% (279)
Queen Anne s	Income Above Limit Requested Closure Work Sanction Redetermination No Dependent Child	40.0% (66) 14.5% (24) 10.3% (17) 8.5% (14) 8.5% (14)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved	46.5% (60) 11.6% (15) 10.9% (14) 10.9% (14) 10.1% (13)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure No Eligible Child Work Sanction	51.6% (48) 14.0% (13) 12.9% (12) 7.5% (7) 6.5% (6)
St. Mary s	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	34.5% (194) 15.8% (89) 10.7% (60) 10.5% (59) 9.8% (55)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Assistance Unit Moved Failed to Sign Repayment Requested Closure	36.6% (152) 20.5% (85) 14.2% (59) 8.2% (34) 5.1% (21) 5.1% (21)	Redetermination Income Above Limit Non-Coop with Eligibility Requested Closure No Eligible Child Eligibility	30.5% (85) 27.2% (76) 9.7% (27) 6.8% (19) 5.0% (14) 5.0% (14)
Somerset	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Requested Closure Eligibility Redetermination	42.5% (157) 18.7% (69) 14.4% (53) 7.3% (27) 6.2% (23)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved Eligibility	33.5% (75) 24.1% (54) 12.5% (28) 8.9% (20) 8.5% (19)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Redetermination Requested Closure No Eligible Child	30.5% (39) 18.0% (23) 13.3% (17) 13.3% (17) 7.0% (9)

	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year One	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Two	Percent	Top 5 Closing Reasons Year Three	Percent
Talbot	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved Work Sanction	49.2% (95) 19.2% (37) 13.5% (26) 4.1% (8) 4.1% (8)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Eligibility Assistance Unit Moved Requested Closure	39.2% (49) 15.2% (19) 12.8% (16) 12.8% (16) 6.4% (8)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Work Sanction Requested Closure No Eligible Child Eligibility	44.7% (51) 13.2% (15) 7.9% (9) 7.0% (8) 5.3% (6) 5.3% (6)
Washington	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction Redetermination	41.7% (410) 14.2% (140) 13.1% (129) 11.1% (109) 5.9% (58)	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Requested Closure Work Sanction	33.2% (212) 15.6% (100) 13.8% (88) 12.4% (79) 11.6% (74)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Requested Closure Work Sanction Eligibility	36.9% (184) 17.9% (89) 11.4% (57) 9.6% (48) 9.2% (46)
Wicomico	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination Requested Closure No Dependent Child	43.2% (455) 13.8% (145) 11.7% (123) 10.1% (106) 4.7% (49)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Assistance Unit Moved Requested Closure	46.7% (425) 14.4% (131) 11.8% (107) 7.1% (65) 6.9% (63)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Requested Closure Whereabouts Unk.	39.0% (279) 17.9% (128) 15.2% (109) 6.8% (49) 4.7% (34)
Worcester	Income Above Limit Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction No Dependent Child	48.2% (164) 17.1% (58) 12.4% (42) 8.5% (29) 2.9% (10)	Income Above Limit Work Sanction Eligibility Requested Closure Assistance Unit Moved	40.5% (105) 18.9% (49) 15.1% (39) 11.6% (30) 3.9% (10)	Income Above Limit Non-Coop with Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure Residency	45.1% (88) 11.8% (23) 9.7% (19) 9.2% (18) 6.7% (13)
Baltimore City	Income Above Limit Eligibility Redetermination No Dependent Child Requested Closure	26.9% (3,723) 18.0% (2,486) 17.5% (2,419) 7.7% (1,070) 7.1% (977)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	23.2% (4,066) 20.7% (3,634) 18.7% (3,289) 8.6% (1,504) 6.0% (1,045)	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction No Eligible Child	39.5% (8,055) 19.8% (4,030) 15.4% (3,132) 9.6% (1,956) 3.1% (630)
Maryland Without Baltimore City	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction	27.6% (7,278) 21.2% (5,578) 11.4% (3,010) 9.5% (2,599) 7.4% (1,959)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	29.3% (6,759) 24.0% (5,523) 14.1% (3,249) 11.9% (2,734) 6.1% (1,407)	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	28.1% (4,904) 27.7% (4,834) 12.4% (2,165) 10.7% (1,863) 5.8% (1,017)
Maryland With Baltimore City	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Requested Closure Work Sanction	29.9% (12,027) 19.9% (7,997) 13.7% (5,496) 8.9% (3,577) 5.5% (2,226)	Income Above Limit Redetermination Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	26.8% (10,867) 22.5% (9,157) 16.1% (6,538) 10.4% (4,238) 6.0% (2,452)	Redetermination Income Above Limit Eligibility Work Sanction Requested Closure	34.2% (12,959) 23.4% (8,864) 14.0% (5,297) 10.1% (3,819) 4.3% (1,624)

Full Family Sanctions: Statewide and Jurisdictional Analyses

In designing its welfare reform program, Maryland elected the PRWORA option to impose a full family sanction, cessation of the entire family's grant, when the adult recipient fails to comply with work requirements or to cooperate with child support. There is a mandatory 30-day conciliation period before sanctioning, but state law requires a full sanction upon the first instance of non-compliance. Because this was a new and more severe penalty, the frequency and patterns of its use have been tracked since the start of reform in October 1996. This section of the report provides statewide and jurisdiction-specific comparative data on the universe of sanctions during the first three years of reform.¹³

Full Family Sanctions: Statewide Analysis

Consistent with legislative intent, the universe data show that full family sanctions have been used rather sparingly across the state during reform's first three years. As anticipated, however, the use of sanctions has increased over time. Also as expected, the vast majority of sanctions, statewide, in all three years have been imposed for non-compliance with work requirements, rather than for non-cooperation with child support.

Statewide, for the first 12 months of reform, sanctioning was the reason for closure in 6.1% of all cases; the proportion of all closures due to sanctioning increased to 11.7% in the second year and held steady at that level in the third year. In each of

¹³ See Born, C. E., Caudill, P. J., and Cordero, M. L. (November, 1999). *Life After Welfare: A Look At Sanctioned Families*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work for a more detailed examination of the characteristics and experiences of sanctioned families.

the three years, as noted, the vast majority of sanctions were for work-related reasons. In the first year, statewide, 89% of sanctions were work-related, as were 89% and 86% of all sanctions in the second and third years, respectively.

Full Family Sanctions: Jurisdictional Analysis

At the jurisdictional level, sanctioning patterns during the first three years are generally similar to those for the state at a whole, but a few deviations from the pattern are also evident. A key similarity is that in all 24 subdivisions, in all three years, work sanctions were more common than child support sanctions. Indeed, in each of the first three years of reform there was at least one subdivision where no child support sanctions were imposed.¹⁴

In all three years there were noticeable differences across jurisdictions in the relative proportions of cases closed because of sanctioning. In general, counties with the highest proportions of work sanctioning tended, in all three years, to be smaller, more rural jurisdictions.¹⁵ In Anne Arundel, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties, as well as Baltimore City, the percentage of cases closed due to a work sanction increased steadily over time. In 15 subdivisions, (Allegany, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties) the percentage of cases closed due

¹⁴Subdivisions with no recorded child support sanctions were: Allegany, Caroline, Frederick and Garrett counties (year one); Queen Anne's County (year two); and Anne Arundel, Cecil, Queen Anne's and Somerset counties (year three).

¹⁵Subdivisions with the highest rates of work sanctioning were: Calvert, Charles and Somerset counties (year one); Somerset, Dorchester and Allegany counties (year two); and Dorchester, Somerset, Baltimore and Calvert counties (year three).

to a work sanction increased between years one and two and then decreased in year three. In Charles, Harford, and St. Mary's Counties, the proportion of cases closed due to work sanctions decreased steadily over time, and in the two remaining counties (Garrett and Howard) the proportion decreased between years one and two and then increased between years two and three.

Child support sanctioning, as noted, was relatively uncommon in all locales, but a variety of patterns were observed. Child support sanctions were most common, proportionately, in the counties of Carroll, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's (year one); Charles, Howard and Montgomery (year two); and Howard, Kent and Prince George's (year three). In Allegany, Caroline, Garrett, Howard, Kent, Prince George's and Talbot Counties and Baltimore City, the percentage of child support sanctions, while remaining low, increased over time. In Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Montgomery, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties, the proportion of cases closed due to child support sanctions increased between years one and two and then decreased in year three. In Anne Arundel, Cecil and St. Mary's Counties, the percentage of child support sanctions decreased over time. In Dorchester and Washington Counties, the proportion decreased between years one and two and then increased in year three. Calvert and Queen Anne's Counties had unique patterns; in Calvert County, the proportion of cases closed for non-cooperation with child support remained steady between years one and two and then decreased in year three. In Queen Anne's County, the proportion of child support sanctions decreased from year one to year two, and remained steady at no such sanctions in years two and three. Table 6, on the following pages, presents full family sanctioning data for the state and, separately, for each subdivision for each of the first three years of reform.

Table 6. Full Family Sanctions

	Full Family Sanctions	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
		Year One		Year Two		Year Three	
Allegany	Work Child Support	620	9.8%0.0%	822	19.6%0.5%	432	14.8%0.7%
Anne Arundel	Work Child Support	789	4.1%0.5%	2522	12.3%0.1%	1700	13.1%0.0%
Baltimore County	Work Child Support	56944	11.7%0.9%	77377	17.7%1.8%	61328	16.6%0.8%
Calvert	Work Child Support	606	15.9%1.6%	695	22.0%1.6%	301	15.1%0.5%
Caroline	Work Child Support	160	6.0%0.0%	321	15.9%0.5%	152	10.2%1.4%
Carroll	Work Child Support	3411	7.3%2.4%	429	13.2%2.8%	327	11.7%2.6%
Cecil	Work Child Support	698	10.8%1.3%	844	17.9%0.9%	410	13.1%0.0%
Charles	Work Child Support	14111	17.1%1.3%	8424	12.8%3.7%	382	9.3%0.5%
Dorchester	Work Child Support	348	7.3%1.7%	822	19.8%0.5%	534	19.6%1.5%
Frederick	Work Child Support	590	7.5%0.0%	462	9.6%0.4%	381	9.9%0.3%
Garrett	Work Child Support	250	12.6%0.0%	181	10.2%0.6%	242	14.7%1.2%
Harford	Work Child Support	7615	7.5%1.5%	5413	7.2%1.7%	345	6.3%0.9%
Howard	Work Child Support	9915	13.4%2.0%	4914	10.8%3.1%	4413	12.9%3.8%

	Full Family Sanctions	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
		Year One		Year Two		Year Three	
Kent	Work Child Support	11 1	8.3% 0.8%	6 2	8.6% 2.9%	2 2	5.4% 5.4%
Montgomery	Work Child Support	19 36	0.7% 1.4 %	109 89	5.3% 4.3%	83 24	6.5% 1.9%
Prince George s	Work Child Support	29 30	4.3% 0.4%	704 124	9.9% 1.7%	475 279	8.1% 4.8%
Queen Anne s	Work Child Support	17 5	10.3% 3.0%	14 0	10.9% 0.0%	6 0	6.5% 0.0%
St. Mary s	Work Child Support	59 13	10.5% 2.3%	8 3	1.9% 0.7%	4 1	1.4% 0.4%
Somerset	Work Child Support	69 1	18.7% 0.3%	54 2	24.1% 0.9%	23 0	18.0% 0.0%
Talbot	Work Child Support	8 1	4.1% 0.5%	19 2	15.2% 1.6%	9 3	7.8% 2.6%
Washington	Work Child Support	109 10	11.1% 1.0%	74 3	11.6% 0.5%	48 3	9.6% 0.6%
Wicomico	Work Child Support	25 18	2.4% 1.7%	30 23	3.3% 2.5%	19 15	2.6% 2.1%
Worcester	Work Child Support	29 3	8.5% 0.9%	49 4	18.9% 1.5%	19 1	9.7% 0.5%
Baltimore City	Work Child Support	267 12	1.9% 0.1%	1,504 104	8.6% 0.6%	1,956 230	9.5% 1.1%
Maryland Without Baltimore City	Work Child Support	1,959 245	7.4% 0.9%	2,734 408	11.9% 1.8%	1,863 395	10.7% 2..3%
Maryland With Baltimore City	Work Child Support	2,226 257	5.5% 0.6%	4,238 512	10.4% 1.3%	3,819 625	10.1% 1.6%

Conclusion

There has been near universal use of the term *welfare reform* to describe the national, state and local-level changes to cash assistance that have been wrought by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and implementing state legislation. However, the reality is that welfare as we knew it was not reformed, it was repealed. Programs which replaced the old system, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), including Maryland's new program, have a still relatively brief existence, and continue to evolve.

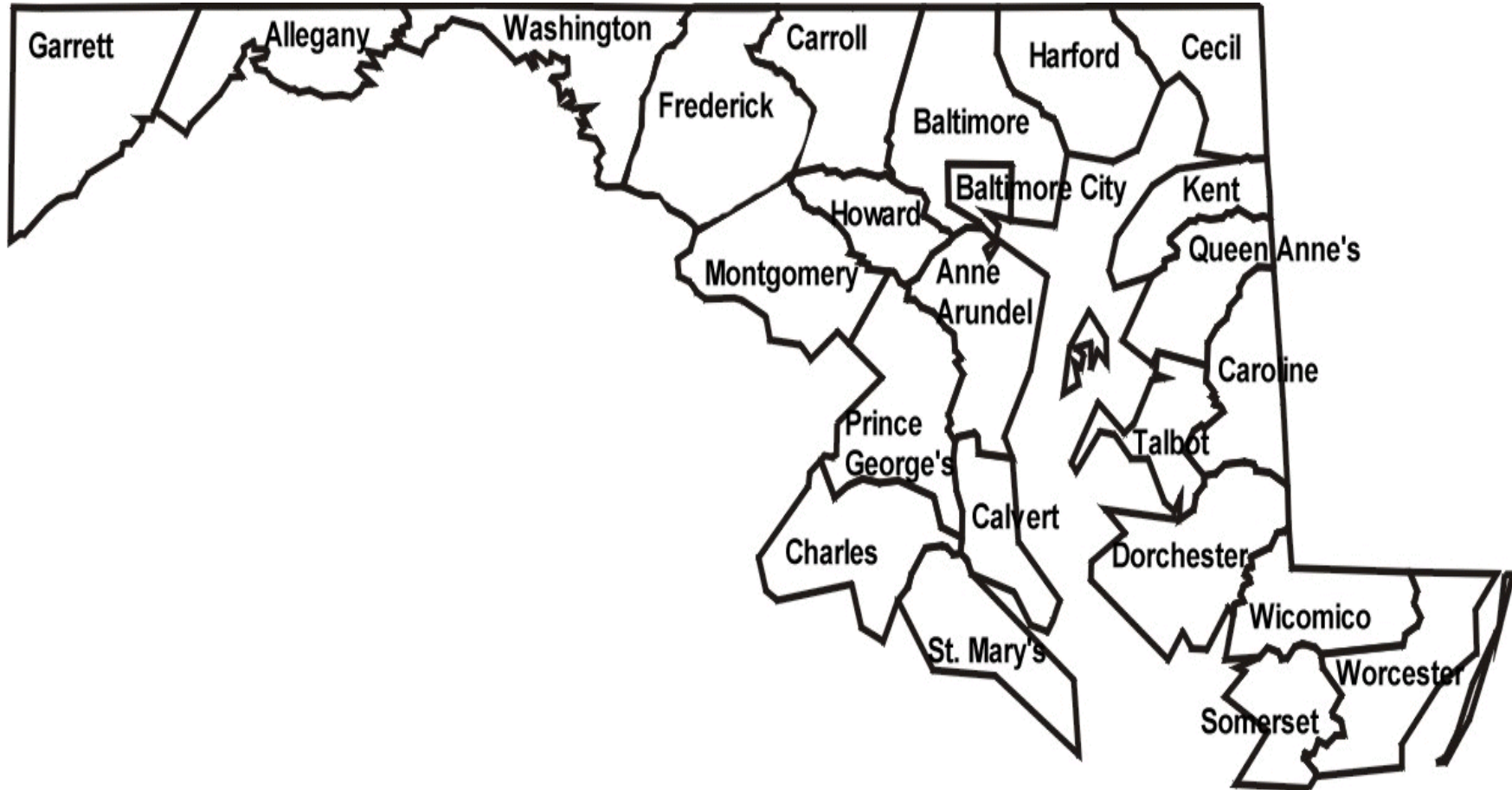
Because of the enormity of the changes and the importance of these programs to families, Maryland has instituted a comprehensive program of research to document the outcomes of its reform efforts and to monitor trends over time at both the state and local levels. The former objective is carried out largely through a cluster of related research studies known as the *Life After Welfare* series. The latter is addressed, in part, by production of annual reports, the *Caseload Exits* series, which describe the universe of case closings at the statewide and jurisdictional levels. Today's report takes the information contained in the first three *Caseload Exits* reports and provides a comparative look, over time, at important trends at the statewide and sub-state levels.

What conclusions are suggested by this comparative review of universe data for the first three years of reform? A first is that exiting patterns and trends, including case characteristics, case closing reasons and the use of full family sanctions, have been generally consistent over time statewide and across jurisdictions. More specifically, the number of cases closing each year has decreased slightly over time as was expected, all but one jurisdictions' shares of closing cases are very much in line with their shares

of overall caseloads, the profile of exiting cases has not changed markedly, work-related and reapplication/redetermination-related closure reasons remain most common, and full family sanctions continue to be sparingly used and predominantly are imposed for non-compliance with work program requirements.

There is only one notable exception to the general trends noted above, that being Baltimore City, where at least in certain respects, welfare reform experiences to date, insofar as these are documented in the closing cases universe data for the first three years, have not paralleled those in the other 23 jurisdictions. The perhaps myriad reasons for this continuing situation can not be discerned from the raw data. However, the City's disproportionate share of today's active cash assistance caseload (conservatively about three-fifths of the statewide total), and its different welfare reform experiences over the first three years, in our view, should be matters of some concern. In our view, the comparative data presented in this report provide empirical support for a point we have made in other of our reports: Maryland's continued success in welfare reform as a state will depend heavily in the future on actions taken and accomplishments achieved in Baltimore City.

Appendix A. Map of Maryland



References

Allen, K. and Kirby, M. (July, 2000). *Unfinished Business: Why Cities Matter to Welfare Reform*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. [Online]. Available: <http://www.brookings.org/es/urban/welfarecaseloads/2000report.htm> [2000, August 22].

Born, C.E., Caudill, P.J., Spera, C., and Cordero, M.L. (June, 1999). *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Second Year of FIP*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Born, C.E., Caudill, P.J., Kunz, J., and Cordero, M.L. (April, 2000). *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The Third Year of FIP*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Farrel, M., Fishman, M., Laud, S., & Allen, V. (February, 2000) Understanding the AFDC/TANF Child-Only Caseload: Policies, Composition, and Characteristics in Three States. Baltimore: The Lewin Group. [Online]. Available: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/child-only-caseload00/> [2000, August 22].

U.S. DHHS. (September, 1999). *Frequently Asked Questions about Child-Only Cases*. [Online]. Available: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/FAQ-Child-Only99/childonlyfaq.htm#Has> [2000, August 22].

Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (September, 1997). *Life After Welfare: An Interim Report*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (March, 1998). *Life After Welfare: A Second Interim Report*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (March, 1999). *Life After Welfare: A Third Interim Report*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (October, 1999). *Life After Welfare: A Fourth Interim Report*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (October, 2000). *Life After Welfare: A Fifth Interim Report*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Welfare and Child Support Research and Training Group. (April, 1998). *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: The First Year of FIP*. Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Social Work.