

CASELOAD EXITS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:
STATEWIDE TRENDS
DURING THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS OF FIP

PAMELA C. OVWIGHO, PhD
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

CORRENE SAUNDERS, BA
RESEARCH ANALYST

NICHOLAS KOLUPANOWICH
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

CATHERINE E. BORN, PhD
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
525 WEST REDWOOD STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21201

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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) or visit our website: www.familywelfare.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@dhr.state.md.us or welfare reformer@prodigy.net).

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Executive Summary

Since Maryland began operating the Family Investment Program (FIP) in October 1996, the University of Maryland-Baltimore, School of Social Work, through a long-standing partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Resources, has utilized comprehensive data on welfare leavers to track the implementation, operation and outcomes of welfare reform in our state. The *Life After Welfare* study (currently in its tenth year) provides a longitudinal perspective by focusing on detailed follow-up of a specific sample of leavers over time. In contrast, the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* reports consider the entire universe of cases closing in a particular time period and offer a broader perspective on population trends in case characteristics, exit patterns, and the use of full family sanctioning.

Today's report takes advantage of the unique data available from the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* series to provide state and local policymakers and program managers with a profile of case closing trends over the past seven years. We use administrative data for the universe of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA, Maryland's TANF program) case closures between October 1996 and September 2003 to address two main research questions:

- 1) What is the trend over time in the number and proportions of case closings both statewide and in each jurisdiction?
- 2) What is the profile of families leaving welfare during this period and how has it changed over the past seven years?

Concerning the first research question, we find that over two hundred thousand case closings ($n = 225,566$) occurred statewide between October 1996 and September

2003. The following bullets summarize the trends evident over time and across jurisdictions:

- **Maryland's bi-partisan approach to welfare led to dramatic caseload declines during the first few years of the new program. Although leveling off in subsequent years, case closings remained robust even during the seventh year post-implementation (i.e., 25,348 exiting cases). This trend is particularly notable because many other states have begun to report steady increases in welfare caseloads and because our other studies have shown that the majority of exiting families do not return to the welfare rolls.**

During the first full year of welfare reform in Maryland, a total of 41,206 case closures were recorded, as were nearly that many during the second year of reform (n=40,773). The third year of reform, corresponding with the period from October 1998 through September 1999, saw 37,997 individual case closures. Case closures dropped to not quite 27,000 (n=26,853) during year four and, since that time, have held fairly steady at roughly 25,000 case closures per year.

The net result is that, overall, Maryland's cash assistance caseload continues to decline, albeit much more modestly than in past years. In contrast, however, 31 other states have experienced recent caseload increases.

- **This multi-year analysis confirms what other studies have indicated: the pace and pattern of welfare reform implementation and thus program outcomes were initially quite different in Baltimore City than in the 23 Maryland counties. In terms of welfare cases closures, however, these differences have largely diminished in more recent years.**

Simply stated, the pace of reform was not as swift in Baltimore City and its caseload dropped more slowly during the first few years of the new welfare program. As a result, counties contributed a greater share of overall case closings than their share of the total active statewide caseload would have predicted, while fewer Baltimore City cases closed than one would have expected based on its share of the state's

caseload. During the first year of reform, to illustrate, Baltimore City had 17.2% fewer closures than expected based on caseload size. By the end of the seventh year of reform (September 2003), however, this closing/caseload gap had all but disappeared.

For policy makers and program managers, these findings combined with the results from our *Life After Welfare* study show the success that Maryland jurisdictions have achieved in reducing their TANF caseloads and moving families from welfare to work. Although welfare reform may have taken longer to implement in Baltimore City, by the end of the seventh year, all jurisdictions had closing rates comparable to their caseload shares.

Our findings regarding the profile of exiting cases in many ways mirror the general case closing trends in that most changes occurred in the first three to four years of reform. It remains true that the majority of exiting TANF cases consist of an African-American woman in her early thirties and her one or two children, the youngest of whom is about six years old. However, there have been significant changes as well, many consistent with changes in the size and composition of the active TANF caseload:

- **Over the course of reform in Maryland, the average length of time on welfare before case closure has gone down, while the proportions of closures accounted for by child-only cases, cases headed by African-American payees, and cases containing at least one child less than three years of age have gone up.**

At the outset of reform, the typical exiting case had been on welfare for a little more than two years (26.1 months); by the seventh year this had declined to not quite one year (11.8 months). This trend is consistent with the ‘work first’ orientation embodied in Maryland’s reform program and with the implicit goal of preventing families experiencing financial crises from becoming long-term welfare recipients.

Over time, the proportion of closures involving African-American payees has increased from about two-thirds in the first year of reform to about four-fifths in more recent years, a proportion more in line with the ethnic composition of the overall cash assistance caseload. This statewide trend can be at least partially explained by the higher share of Baltimore City closures in more recent years, but it should be noted that the percentage of African-American payees involved in welfare case closures increased in both Baltimore City and the counties.

Child-only cases, those in which no adult is included in the grant, initially accounted for only about one in six closures (15.6%), considerably less than their representation in the overall active caseload. Subsequently, child-only cases have come to account for about one in five closures (21.4%). While child-only cases remain under-represented among exiting cases, this is not a matter for concern per se because these cases are not subject to various program requirements on which federal performance is assessed and penalties can be imposed. The percentage of case closures involving families with at least one young child (under three years of age) has also increased over time - from roughly one closure in three (34.7%) during the first year of reform to about two of every five (39.7%) in the third and all subsequent years.

- **Administratively-recorded case closing codes, limitations notwithstanding, have shown remarkable consistency over time. The only notable, if expected, change has been a steady increase in the percent of closures due to full family sanctioning for non-compliance with work or child support requirements.**

Administratively-recorded case closing codes are an admittedly incomplete and sometimes quite inaccurate indication of the real reason that a family's welfare case has closed. However, these codes are a good measure of what front-line welfare staff know

and have recorded about the case closure and have been shown to correlate with important post-exit outcomes such as employment and recidivism (Ovwigbo, Tracy and Born, 2004). Over time and in each of the first seven years of reform in Maryland, two closure codes have predominated: no recertification/redetermination and income above limit/started work. Together, these two codes account for roughly one of every two closures during the entire study period, with little variation from year to year.

Full family sanctioning, in contrast, was used very sparingly during the first year of reform (6.1% of all administratively-recorded closure codes). As expected, its use has incrementally increased in each subsequent year such that, in the seventh year of reform, full family sanctions accounted for about one in every five closures (22.2%). Considering all seven years together, full family sanctioning accounts for 14.3% of all closures. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of full family sanctions have been for non-compliance with work requirements; this is true for each of the seven years considered separately and for the seven-year period as a whole.

In closing, we offer two general conclusions or recommendations for policy makers and program managers. First, our findings as well as those of several other studies show that welfare reform implementation took longer in Baltimore City, although it eventually reached the same pace as the other jurisdictions in terms of closings. Given that Baltimore City's caseload remains significantly larger than the other jurisdictions and its problems and challenges somewhat unique, we would expect that it could take longer for Baltimore City to fully implement any new reforms enacted as part of TANF reauthorization. This possibility should be kept in mind as new performance

measures and goals are set, particularly because, due to the size of its caseload, Baltimore City exerts enormous influence on statewide results.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the data presented here on closing cases and elsewhere on current TANF recipients indicate that the composition of today's welfare caseload differs in some important respects from the composition of the AFDC caseload when PRWORA was enacted. As policy makers and program managers craft the next phase of welfare reform, it is important to keep these changes in mind. That is, although the goal may remain the same – to move families from welfare to self-sufficiency – the starting place may be different.

Introduction

Since Maryland began operating the Family Investment Program (FIP) in October 1996, the University of Maryland-Baltimore, School of Social Work, through a long-standing partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Resources, has utilized comprehensive data on welfare leavers to track the implementation, operation and outcomes of welfare reform in our state. The *Life After Welfare* study (currently in its tenth year) provides a longitudinal perspective by focusing on detailed follow-up of a specific sample of leavers over time. In contrast, the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* reports consider the entire universe of cases closing in a particular time period and offer a broader perspective of population trends in case characteristics, exit patterns, and the use of full family sanctioning. Eight reports have been issued in *The Caseload Exits at the Local Level* series to date. Seven of these were annual reports covering each year from October 1996 to September 2003 (Born, Caudill, Cordero, & Kunz, 2000; Born, Caudill, Spera, & Cordero, 1999; Born & Herbst, 2002; Born, Hetling, & Saunders, 2003; Born, Ovwigho, & Tracy, 2003; Born, Ruck, & Cordero, 2001; Welfare & Child Support Research & Training Group, 1998).¹ The eighth, issued in 2000, compares patterns across the first three years (Born, Ovwigho, & Cordero, 2000).

Today's report takes advantage of the unique data available from the *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* series to provide state and local policymakers and program managers with a profile of case closing trends over the past seven years. Such a review is an extremely worthwhile exercise at this time. While welfare reform was inaugurated at a time of economic boom, it has continued through an economic recession (officially,

¹ Previous reports from these series are available at our website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu>.

March 2001 to November 2001) and a somewhat sluggish recovery. Initially, welfare caseloads plummeted in nearly all states and local jurisdictions. However, more recently, caseload levels have become fairly flat, experiencing slight increases in some months and slight decreases in others. We also know from a variety of national and statewide studies that there have been some changes in the characteristics of the welfare caseload (see, for example, Born, Hetling-Wernyj, Lacey, & Tracy, 2003; Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, 1999; Hercik, Palla, & Kakusa, 2003; Ovwigho, 2001). Most notably, today's caseload is generally more concentrated in urban areas (e.g. Baltimore City) and contains a higher proportion of child only cases, where the adult casehead does not receive assistance.

Given this context as well as the still pending reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, it is important to consider how patterns of case closings and the characteristics of families exiting the welfare rolls have changed over the past seven years. To that end, we use administrative data for the universe of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA, Maryland's TANF program) case closings between October 1996 and September 2003 to address two main research questions:

- 1) What is the trend over time in the number and proportions of case closings both statewide and in each jurisdiction?
- 2) What is the profile of families leaving welfare during this period and how has it changed over the past seven years?

A companion report, to be issued in the near future, *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: Jurisdictional Trends During the First Seven Years of FIP*, examines these same questions for each of Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions. Together these two reports

provide a comprehensive picture of case closing trends for our State's reformed welfare program from its inception to the present. Knowing what has been consistent over the past seven years, as well as what has changed in terms of who is leaving welfare and how they are leaving the rolls, better prepares policy makers and program managers to design programs that are appropriate for Maryland and responsive to the realities of the next stage of welfare reform.

Methods

To answer our research questions, aggregate data on closing cases were obtained by the authors from the administrative data systems of the Maryland Department of Human Resources. Two systems are used: the Automated Information Management System/Automated Master File (AIMS/AMF) and its replacement, the 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 also contain the following data that were used in the previous *Caseload Exits at the Local Level* annual reports and are presented in this report as well:

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

A closing case (or case closure), for purposes of our seven 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) for at least one day. That is, we counted “cases” or families rather than “closures” per se. Within each year, a family was only counted once, even if they left and returned to welfare multiple times in the year. For this report, we combine each of those seven yearly files. We present data for 225,566 TCA case closures of at least one day’s duration at some point between October 1996 and September 2003. Cases are unique within each study year, but may be included in more than one year, if they returned to welfare and exited again.² Thus, in this report our unit of analysis is closures rather than cases.

² Three-fifths of the 225,566 cases in our sample appear in only one year during the study period because they exited TANF for at least one day only one time between October 1996 and September 2003.

Findings: Case Closing Trends

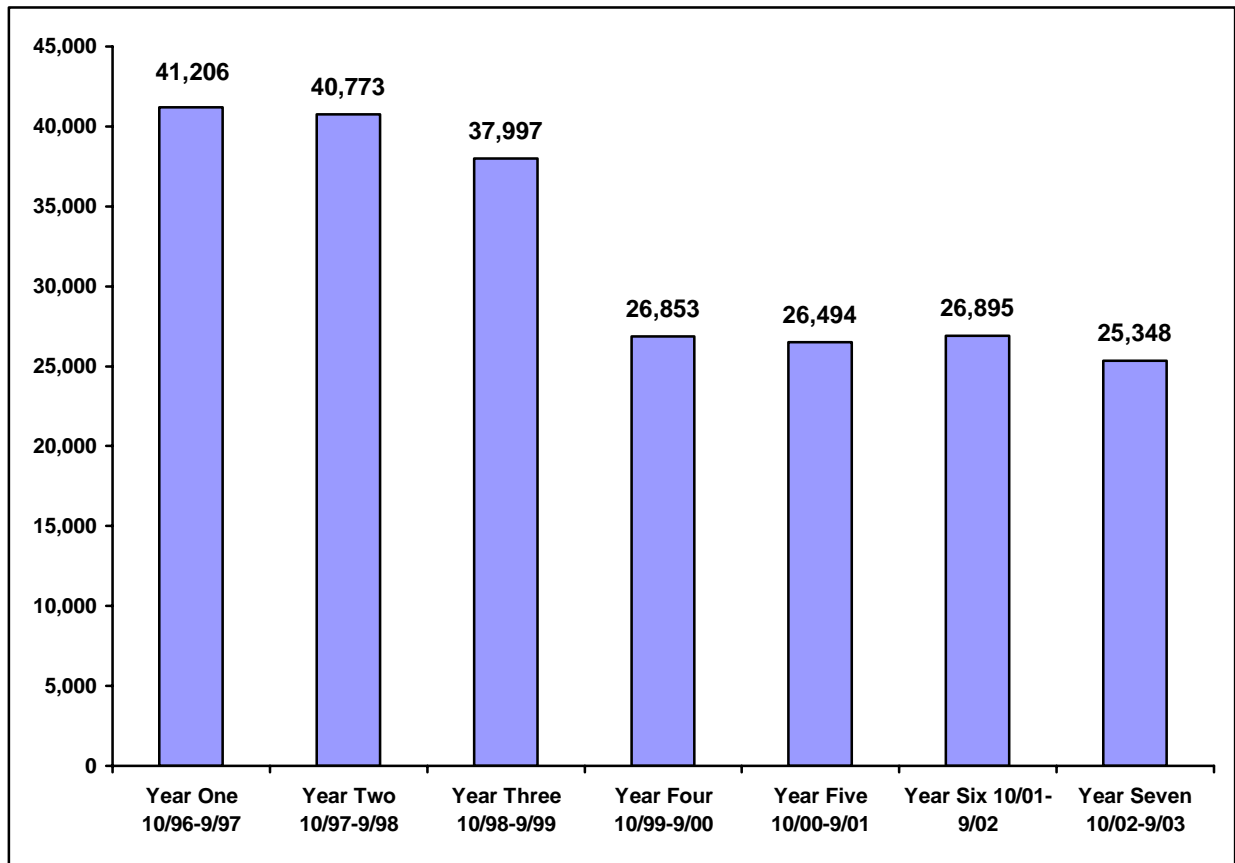
In this chapter, we present statewide trends in case closings, closing case characteristics, and closing reasons. Because the two jurisdictions with Maryland's largest TANF caseloads, Baltimore City and Prince George's County, often exhibit different patterns than the other 22 counties, they are separated out in some analyses. Readers interested in specific findings for each of Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions should refer to our companion report, *Caseload Exits at the Local Level: Jurisdictional Trends During the First Seven Years of FIP*.

Number of Case Closings Over Time

Over the course of the past seven years since welfare reform began (October 1996 to September 2003), there were over two hundred thousand case closings statewide (n=225,566), representing 133,225 unique families whose cases closed for at least one day.³ Figure 1, following this discussion, shows that, statewide, the number of closings decreased sharply in each of the first through fourth years of reform, and then leveled off. In the first year of FIP, 41,206 cases closed, as did 40,773 cases in year two and 37,997 in the third full year of the new program. Although still impressive, the number of closings recorded in the fourth year (26,853) was roughly thirty percent lower (29.3%) than the number of closings recorded the year before. As Figure 1 illustrates, the number of closings remained fairly stable during the fifth (26,494) and sixth years (26,895), dropping to 25,348 during year seven. That number decreased slightly in the second year (n = 40,773) and in the third (n = 37,997).

³ Readers should note that because a one-day exit criteria was used for inclusion in the study, the sample includes many families whose initial case closings were "administrative churning" rather than true exits. Previous analyses suggest that approximately 30% of cases closed for one day will reopen within the next 30 days.

Figure 1. Number of Case Closings Statewide 10/96 – 9/03



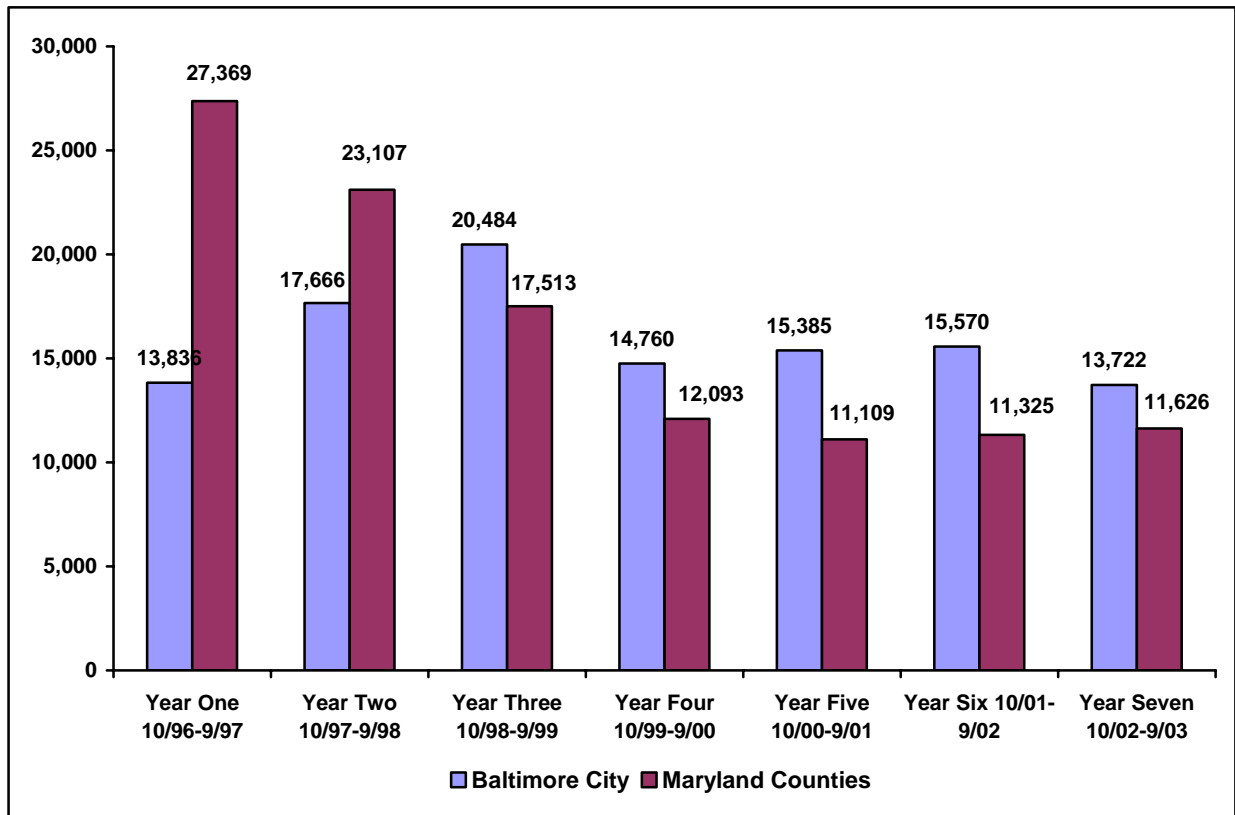
Throughout the first seven years of FIP, almost half of the statewide closings (49.4%, or 111,423) occurred in Baltimore City. The rest were divided among the state's four largest counties (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties), which accounted for about a third of all closings (32.7%, or 73,801 closings), and the remainder of the state (17.9%, or 40,342 closings).

While the statewide trend over time in case closings was generally a downward one, the pattern was somewhat different in Baltimore City relative to the 23 counties. As seen in Figure 2, following, while the number of closings in Maryland's 23 counties went down sharply in each of the first few years of reform, it actually went up in Baltimore City during this period. In the first year of FIP, 13,836 cases closed in

Baltimore City. This number increased by almost half to 20,484 in the third year of reform. However, consistent with the trend observed in the other 23 jurisdictions, Baltimore City experienced a sharp decline in the number of closures between the third and fourth years. For both Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties, the number of closings has remained fairly steady between the fourth and seventh years.

The pattern of increasing numbers of closings in the initial years of welfare reform is not unique to Baltimore City, but rather is a phenomenon also observed in other large urban areas across the nation. It has been well-documented that welfare caseloads in cities initially declined at a slower rate than that of surrounding areas (Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 1999; Waller & Berube, 2002). Although reform in most cities eventually "ramped up" to levels similar to the surrounding counties, the consequence of initially slower rates of case closing resulted in an increased concentration of the welfare caseload in cities. In Maryland, to illustrate, one-half of all TANF families resided in Baltimore City (51%) in the first year of welfare reform. By the fifth year, the proportion of Baltimore City cases in the statewide caseload had increased to three-fifths (61%).

Figure 2. Number of Case Closings in Baltimore City and Maryland Counties



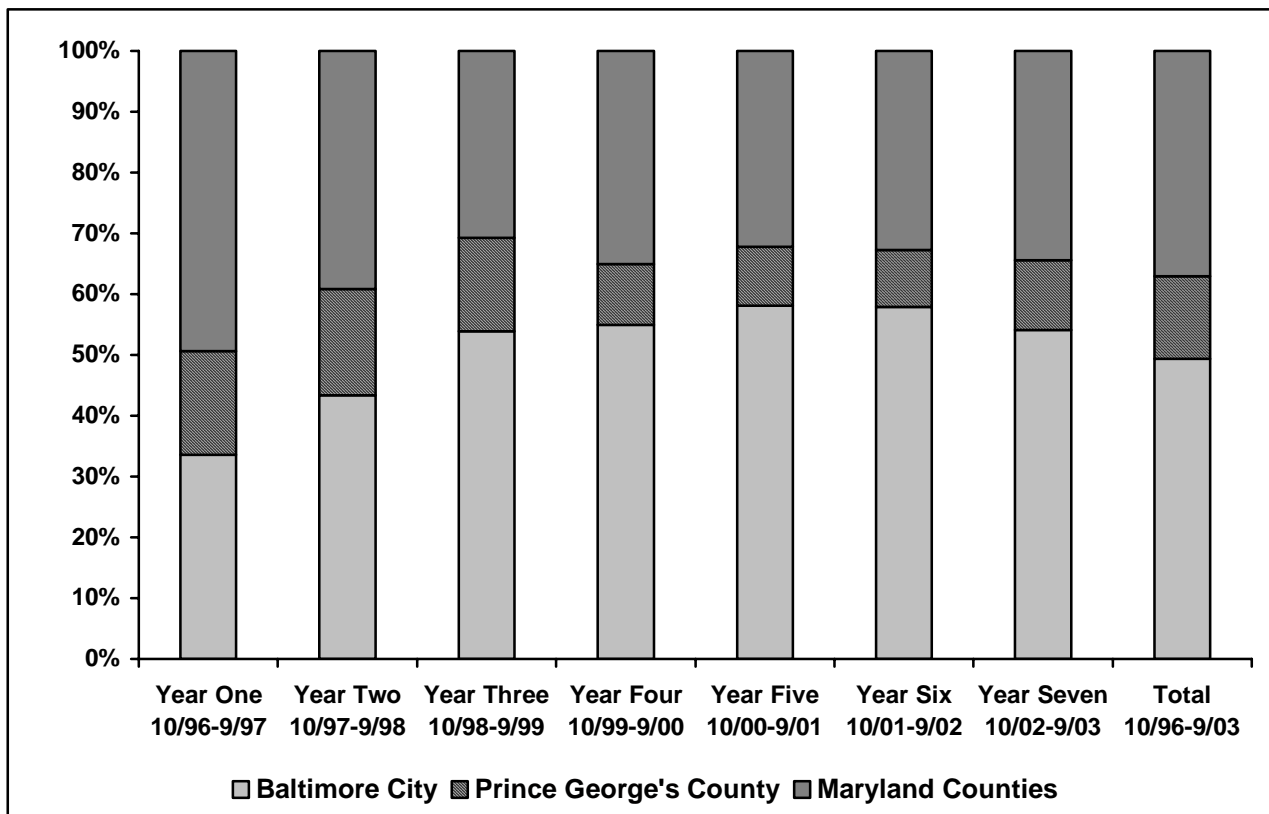
Distribution of Closings Across Jurisdictions Over Time

In addition to changes in the annual number of case closings during each of the first seven years of FIP, there were also some noticeable changes in the distribution of closings across Maryland’s jurisdictions. The most notable changes were observed in Baltimore City and Prince George’s County. As seen in Figure 3, following this discussion, the 22 jurisdictions other than Baltimore City and Prince George’s County accounted for almost half of the state’s closings (49.4%) in Year One, while only one-third of closings occurred in the City (33.6%), and about one-fifth took place in Prince George’s County (17.0%).

During the first six years of reform (October 1996 to September 2002), the proportion of statewide closings occurring in the 22 counties gradually decreased to less than a third of total closings (32.7%), and the proportion in Prince George’s County fell

to about one in ten (9.4%). During this same period, the percent of closings in Baltimore City increased to represent almost three-fifths of the state's total closings (57.9%). Between the sixth and seventh years, however, the proportion of closings accounted for by Baltimore City has decreased. In Year Seven, 54.1% of closings occurred in Baltimore City and 11.5% occurred in Prince George's County. Overall, considering the entire seven-year period, just under half of all closings occurred in Baltimore City (49.4%), about one in eight closings took place in Prince George's County (13.6%), and the remainder, almost two-fifths of all closings, occurred in other Maryland jurisdictions (37.0%).

Figure 3. Proportion of Total Closings in Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and Other Maryland Counties: 10/96 - 9/03



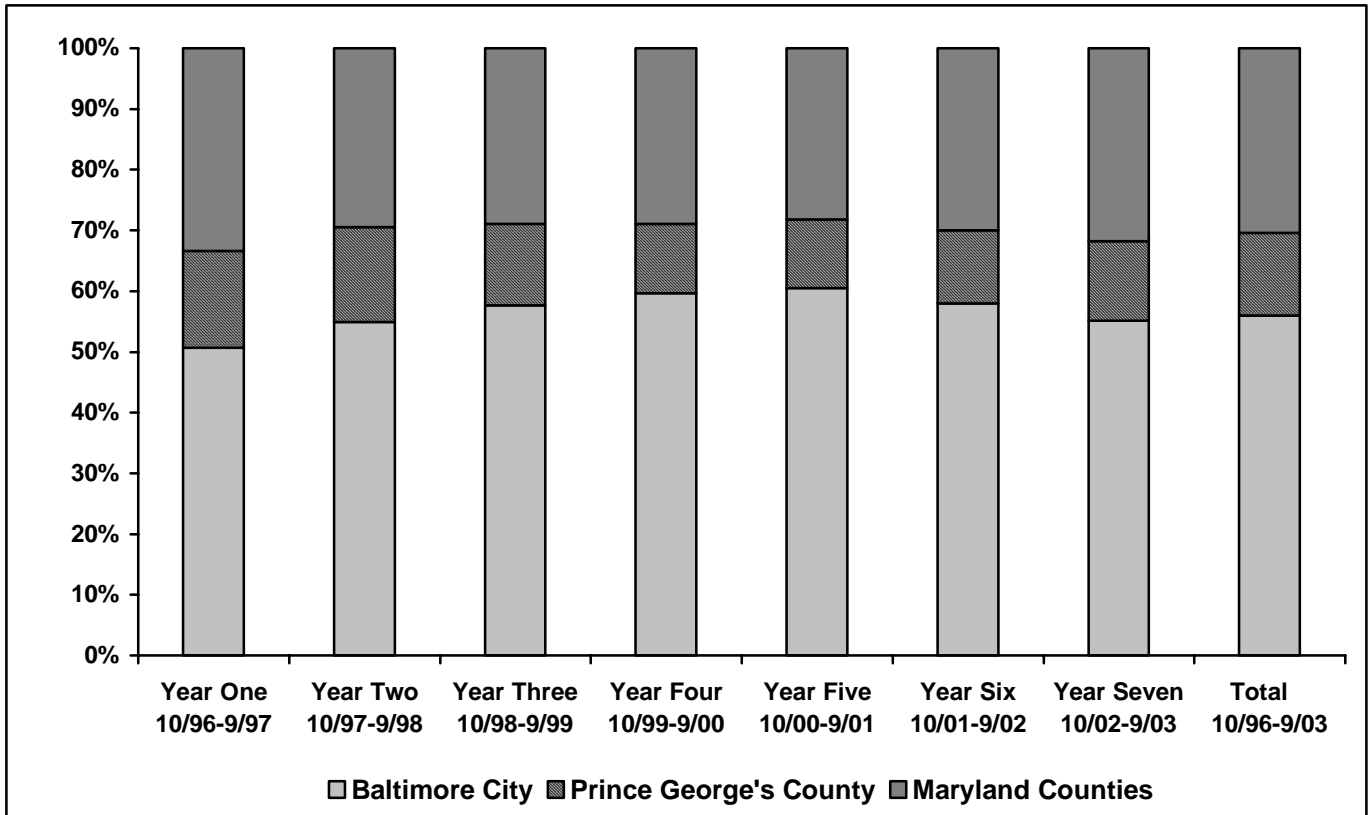
Note: The actual percentages for Figure 3 are presented in the "% Closings" columns of Appendix A.

Distribution of the TANF Caseload Across Jurisdictions Over Time

While the previous graph provides useful information on general state trends, for local jurisdictions it is perhaps more informative to consider the number of closings in a given year relative to caseload size. To that end, we first consider changes in the distribution of the statewide caseload among the 24 jurisdictions over the past seven years. Figure 4, on the following page, shows the change in the distribution of the statewide average annual caseload across jurisdictions from 1996 to 2003.

In general, there has been less fluctuation in the caseload than in case closings. Between the first and fifth years of reform, the proportion of the total caseload carried in Baltimore City rose from 50.8% to 60.5%. In the following two years, however, Baltimore City's share of the caseload gradually dropped to 55.1%. Prince George's County has experienced an opposite trend; in the first five years of reform, its share of the caseload decreased from 15.9% to 11.3%, and then rose in the last two years to 13.1%.

Figure 4. Proportion of Total Caseload in Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and Other Maryland Counties: 10/96 - 9/03



Note: The actual percentages for Figure 4 are presented in the “% Caseload” columns of Appendix A.

Total Closings Relative to Caseload

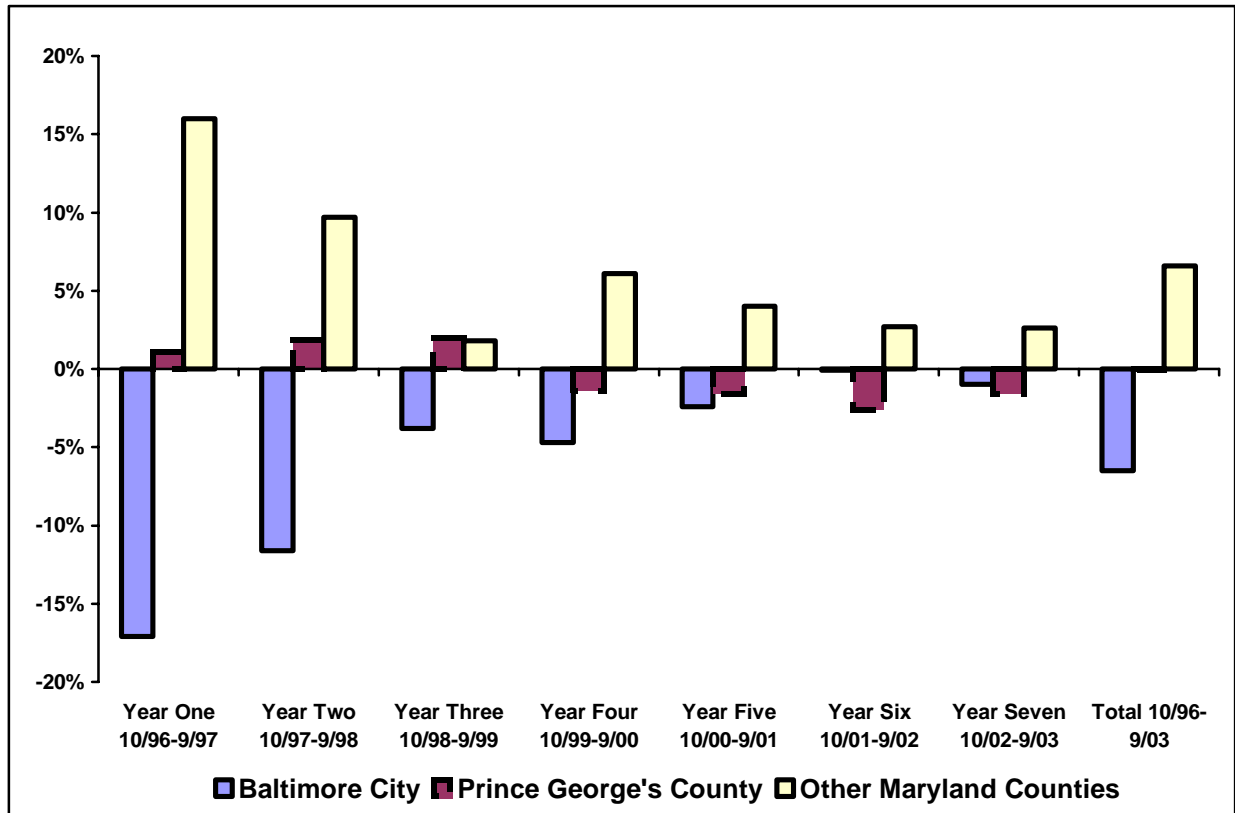
In order to lend perspective to the discussion of jurisdictional distributions of closings and caseloads, the line graph in Figure 5, following, highlights the differences (in percentage points) between the two over time. Appendix A provides detailed data for Figure 5 and for each of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions.

As seen in the figure, the difference between the percentages of total closings and average annual caseload in the first year of reform were quite extreme. For Maryland counties considered as a whole (excluding Prince George’s County), the percent of total closings (49.4%) was 16.1 percentage points higher than the Counties’ share of the total statewide caseload (33.3%). In Baltimore City, the percent of total

closings (33.6%) was 17.2 percentage points lower than its share of the total caseload (50.8%). In Prince George's County, the difference was only 1.1 percentage point (17.0% of closings and 15.9% of the caseload). In other words, in the first year, Maryland counties had more case closures than would have been expected given their share of the state's total TANF caseload. In contrast, Baltimore City had fewer case closures than expected, and Prince George's County case closures were proportionate to its caseload. By the end of the sixth year, the gap between closings and caseload had closed to only a 2.7 point difference among the 22 counties (32.7% of closings and 30.0% of the caseload), the gap in Prince George's County had become negative 2.6 points (9.4% of closings and 12.0% of the caseload), and the gap in Baltimore City had virtually disappeared (57.9% of closings versus 58.0% of the caseload).

Despite some catch up in the latter years, Baltimore City and Prince George's County cumulatively still had a lower total proportion of case closures in the seven years than expected based on their caseload shares. Overall, for the seven year period, the gap between the percentages of closings relative to caseload was -6.5 in Baltimore City (55.9% of the caseload and 49.4% of closings), -0.1 in Prince George's County (13.6% of the caseload and 13.5% of closings), and +6.6 points among the remaining 22 Maryland jurisdictions (30.4% of the caseload and 37.0% of closings).

Figure 5. Difference between Percents of Statewide Closings and Caseload by Year



Note: The actual percentages for Figure 5 are presented in the “Difference” rows of Appendix A.

In sum, this first findings chapter has presented a variety of analyses concerning trends in the number and jurisdictional proportions of case closings over time. We find that the annual number of closings statewide declined sharply across the first through fourth years of reform, but has remained level in the past three years. Initially, fewer case closings occurred in Baltimore City, relative to its caseload, while the 22 Maryland counties (excluding Prince George’s County) experienced more closures than would be expected. However, the number of closings did increase in Baltimore City over time so that by the end of the seventh year its proportion of statewide closings was virtually the same as its proportion of the statewide caseload.

Findings: Closing Case Characteristics

In this chapter, we present findings regarding the characteristics of closing cases and whether the profile of Maryland's welfare leavers has changed over time. We also examine administrative case closing codes, which indicate the technical reasons for case closure known to the front-line case managers and recorded in the automated systems as the official case closure code. Readers should bear in mind that these data, while informative, do not necessarily convey the full complexity of families' lives or the complete stories surrounding their welfare exits. In particular, administrative case closing codes grossly understate the percentage of clients who actually leave welfare for work.

Case Composition

In general, a typical case closure in Maryland over the first seven years of welfare reform involved an assistance unit averaging 2.65 people, usually a single adult (79.7%) with one or two children (75.5%), who had received an average of 19.8 months of continual cash assistance before exiting. Almost all payees involved in case closures were female (95.6%). The average age was approximately 33 years (mean=33.19), and on average, female payees were about 22 years old when their first child was born (mean=21.82). The average age of youngest child in the household was almost six years (mean = 5.87 years) and about two in five case closures included at least one child under the age of three (37.7%).

There are statistically significant differences among the seven annual cohorts on all of these characteristics. However, because the sample size is so large, even small and perhaps unimportant differences reach the standard scientific criteria of statistical

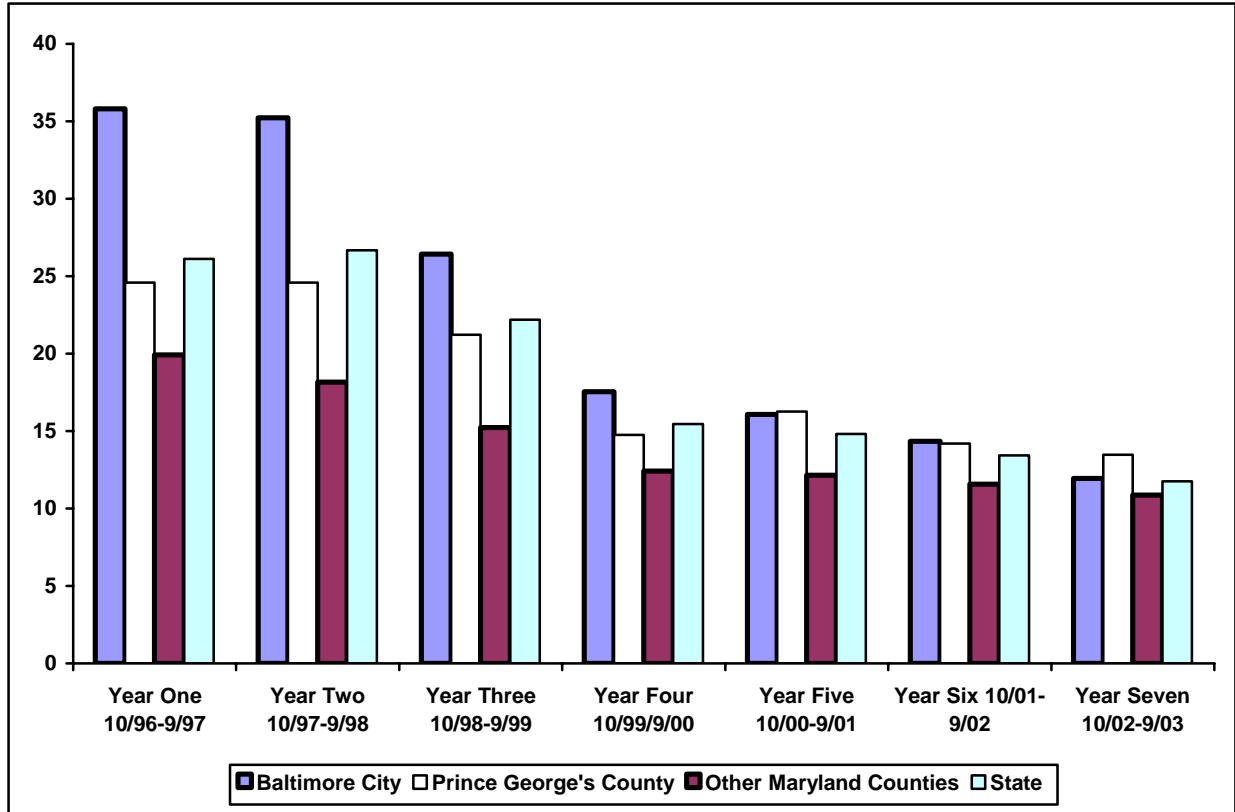
significance. In reality, only four case characteristics have changed substantially over time: 1) the number of adults per assistance unit; 2) length of exiting spell; 3) proportion of African-American payees; and 4) proportion of cases with a child under the age of three. The following discussion highlights these important trends; Appendix B includes a detailed data table for each of the figures presented in this chapter. An additional data table presented in Appendix C provides more details on these characteristics as well as those that have remained fairly stable over time among the statewide exiting caseload.

Average Length of Exiting Spell

How long a family receives cash assistance before exiting is one important predictor of their likelihood of remaining off the rolls. Across the seven years, Maryland families were exiting from a welfare spell that had lasted, on average, 19.80 months, or a little over one and one-half years. However, as illustrated in Figure 6, on the next page, there is a general downward trend, as the average length of exiting spell was 26.11 months, or just over two years among cases closed in the first year of reform, but was only 11.75 months, or just about one year, among cases closing in the seventh year. In contrast, the average length of spell for active TANF cases (that is, those who had not exited) in October 2003 was 21.4 months (Hetling, Born, & Saunders, forthcoming). The median length of exiting spell also decreased over time, dropping from 14.39 months among first year exiters to 7.76 months among leavers in the seventh year. In other words, during year seven, half of all case closings took place when the family had received welfare for less than eight consecutive months.

Figure 6 also shows that the statewide pattern masks important differences among the jurisdictions. The average exit spell declined steadily among cases closing in 22 counties (excluding Prince George's County) from 19.9 months among first year closures to 10.9 among cases closed in the seventh year of reform. In Prince George's County, average exit spell length did not change at all between the first and second years of reform, with cases closing in both years after receiving an average of 24.5 months of assistance. However, after the second year of reform, the mean exit spell length declined for cases closing in Prince George's County, reaching 13.5 months or a little more than one year among families leaving welfare in the seventh year. A similar pattern was observed among Baltimore City closures, although the average spell length among Baltimore City families exiting the rolls in the first and second years of reform was significantly higher than in other jurisdictions, on average, 35.8 and 35.2 months, respectively, or almost three years. Remarkably, average exit spell length declined in Baltimore City to a low of 11.9 months, or one year, among families leaving the rolls in the seventh year of reform.

Figure 6. Average Length of Exiting Spell (Months).



Note: The actual percentages for Figure 6 can be found in Appendix B.

Percentage of Child Only Cases

The second major change among exiting cases during the first seven years of reform is in the proportion of child only cases, where the adult payee is not part of the TANF grant. In the first year of reform, approximately eight out of ten exiting cases included one adult, presumably a single parent (79.7%). Slightly less than one in six (15.6%) of exiters were child-only cases. As shown in Figure 7, after declining slightly during year two, the percentage of child-only cases rose steadily, peaking at 21.4% in Year Five. This figure remained relatively unchanged in Years Six (21.2%) and Seven (20.4%).

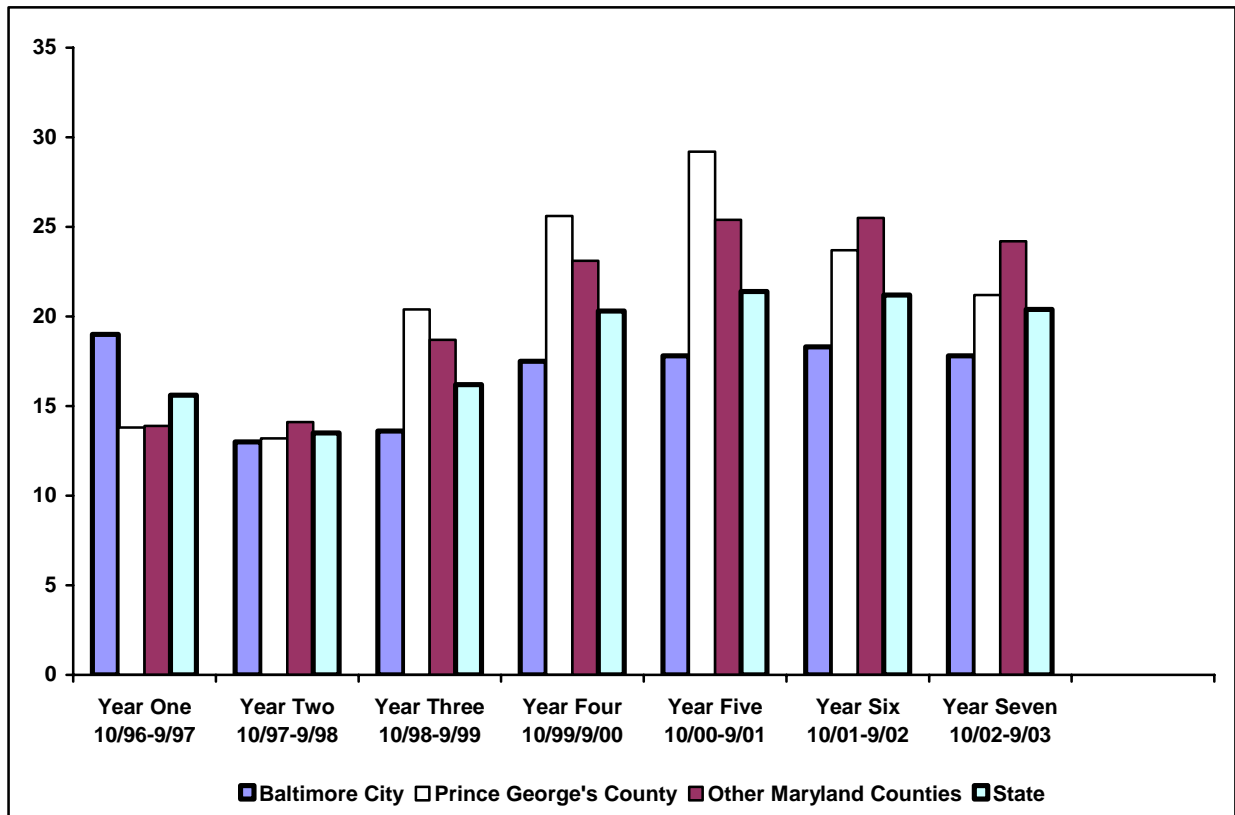
In comparison to the active caseload, child-only cases are somewhat underrepresented among statewide closings, and single adult cases are overrepresented. This discrepancy is most likely because child-only cases are exempt from the time limit and work requirements that apply to most single adult cases. For example, in contrast to the numbers presented previously regarding statewide closings, the percent of child-only cases among the active caseload increased from about one-fifth (21.3%) in October 1996 to almost one-third (32.7%) in October 2003, while the percent of cases with one adult decreased from three-fourths (77.3%) to two-thirds (64.8%) over the same time period (Born, Hetling, & Saunders, 2003, Hetling, et al., forthcoming). The percentage of cases with two adults has remained under three percent among both yearly closings and current cases.

Figure 7 also shows that in each of the first seven years of welfare reform, the percent of child-only cases has been lower among Baltimore City closing cases than among closing cases in other jurisdictions or regions. For example, the percentage of child-only closings increased dramatically from the first to fifth years of reform in Prince George's County (from 13.8% to 29.2%) and in the other 22 counties (from 13.9% to 25.4%), but this has not been true in Baltimore City. In fact, child-only cases accounted for their largest share of cases closing in Baltimore City (19.0%) in the first year and has not returned to that level at any time since.

The differences between Baltimore City and the 23 counties on this dimension most likely reflect caseload composition differences as well as differences in the pace of welfare reform implementation. In general, Baltimore City's welfare caseload contains a lower proportion of child only cases than the other jurisdictions. Moreover, various

evidence, including initially lower rates of case closings, suggests that it took longer for welfare reform to be fully implemented in Baltimore City than in localities with smaller caseloads.

Figure 7. Percent of Child-Only Cases.



Note: The actual percentages for Figure 7 can be found in Appendix B.

Presence of a Child Less Than Three Years Old

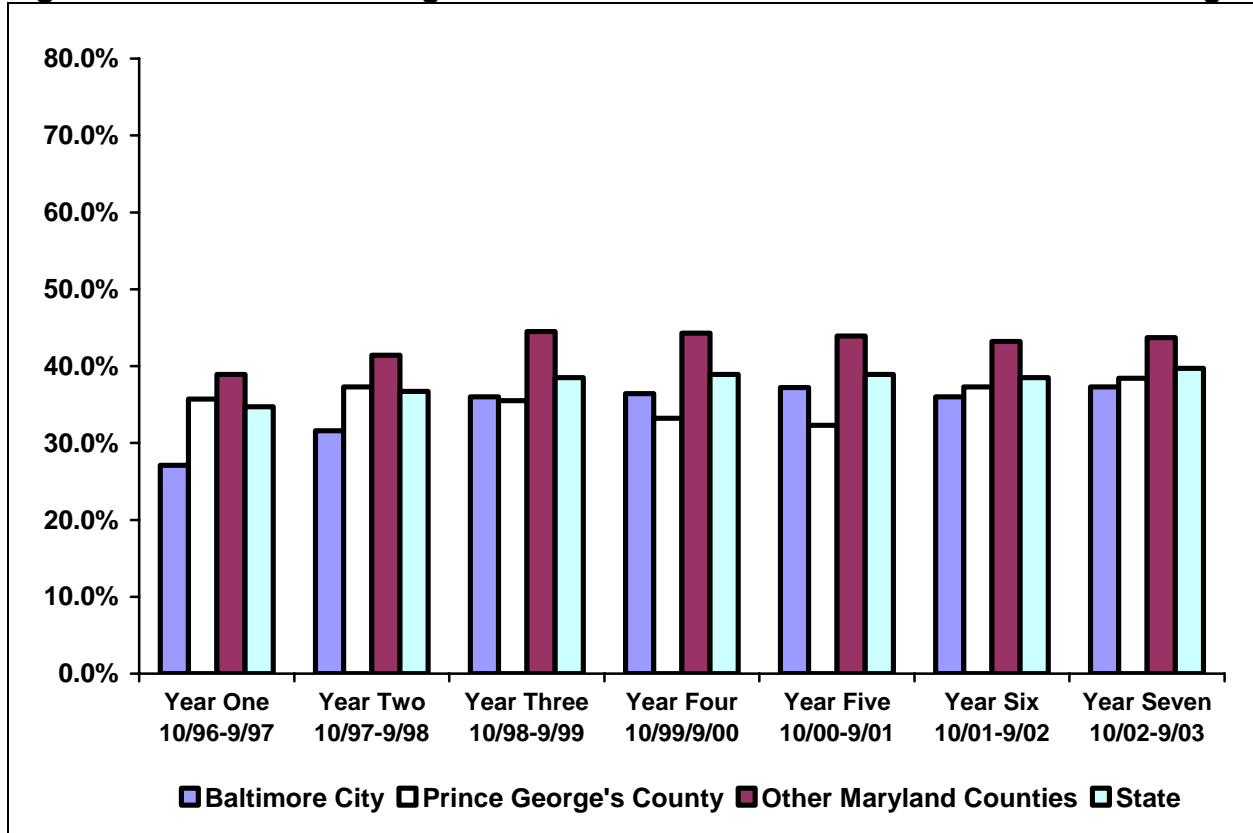
The final case characteristic that has changed significantly among exiting cases during the first seven years of FIP is the percentage of cases with a child under the age of three. As shown in Figure 8, one-third of families (34.7%) leaving TANF in Year 1 included at least one child less than three years old. This proportion increased to two-

fifths (38.5%) by Year 3 and has remained at the same level through the remainder of the study period.

Trends in the percentage of closing cases with a child under three differed between Baltimore City and the 23 Counties. This percentage has increased more among City closings, from 27.1% in Year One to 37.3% in Year 7. It has remained consistently higher among county closings, ranging from 35.7% in Year One to 38.4% in Year Seven for Prince George's County, and 38.9% in Year One to 43.7% in Year Seven for the remaining 22 counties.

Overall for the seven-year period considered as a whole, the percent of cases with a child under three was 42.3% among closings in 22 counties, 35.9% among Prince George's County closings, 34.8% among City closings, and 37.7% statewide. In contrast, in looking at current caseload statistics, the reverse trend is true. Specifically, the percent of active TCA cases with a child under three is higher among Baltimore City cases than county cases, averaging 39.3% and 35.6%, respectively, in October 2003 (Hetling, et al., forthcoming).

Figure 8. Percent of Closing Cases with at Least One Child Under 3 Years of Age



Note: The actual percentages for Figure 8 can be found in Appendix B.

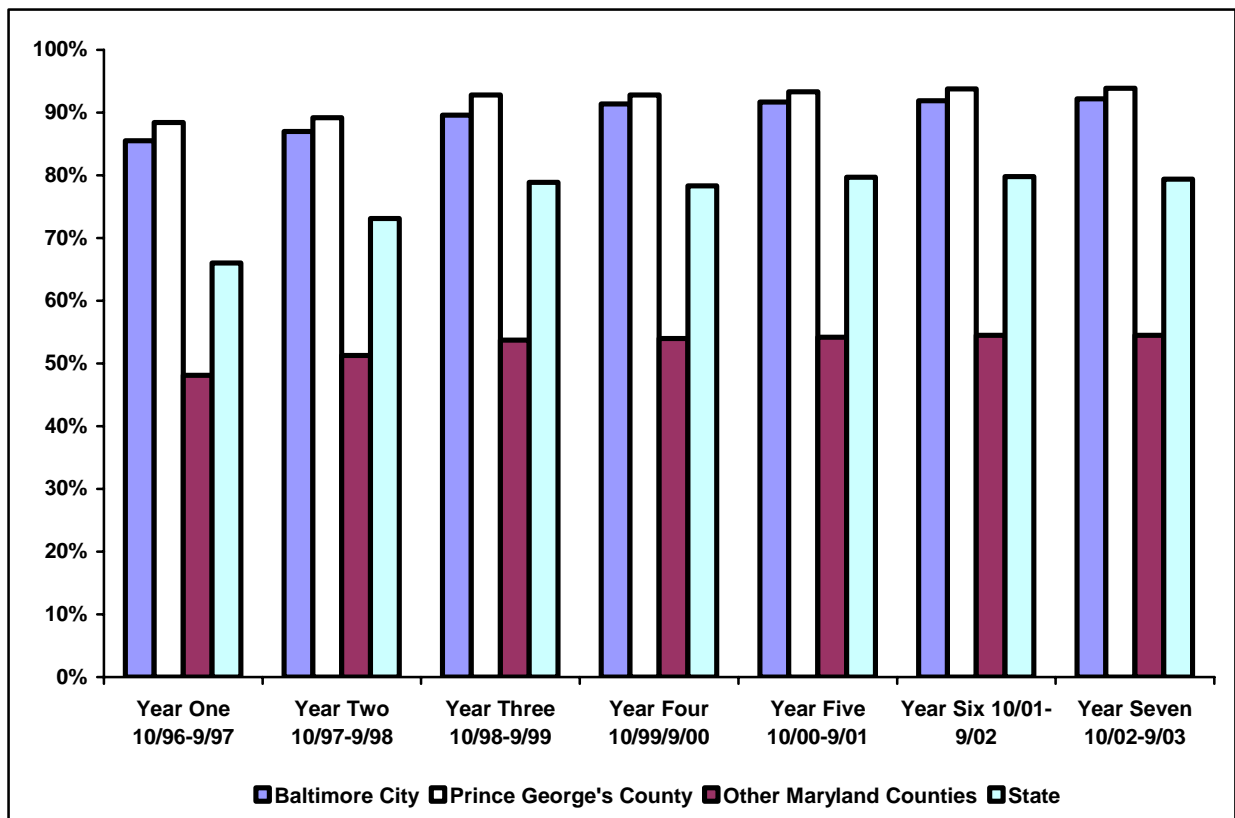
Payee Race/Ethnicity

Despite important changes in some case characteristics, there were few changes in case member characteristics among exiting cases over the first seven years of reform. Figure 9 illustrates one noticeable change over the seven years, a demonstrable increase in the percent of welfare leavers who are African-American. This percentage rose from about two-thirds of exiting payees in Year One (66.0%) to about four-fifths in the seventh year (79.4%).

Overall for the seven-year period, about three-quarters, or 75.8%, of all closures involved payees who are African American. This upward trend most likely is related to

the jurisdictional trends discussed in the previous chapter. Specifically, as the proportion of statewide closings from Baltimore City increased, so did the statewide proportion of African American exiting payees. However, changes in the jurisdictional distribution of exiting cases probably does not completely explain the increase. Figure 9 also shows that a similar trend was evident among closing cases in Baltimore City, Prince George’s County, and the other jurisdictions.

Figure 9. Percent of African American Payees.



Note: The actual percentages for Figure 9 can be found in Appendix B.

Reasons for Case Closure

The final piece in our statewide analysis of case closing trends during the first seven years of FIP concerns administratively-recorded case closing codes. These

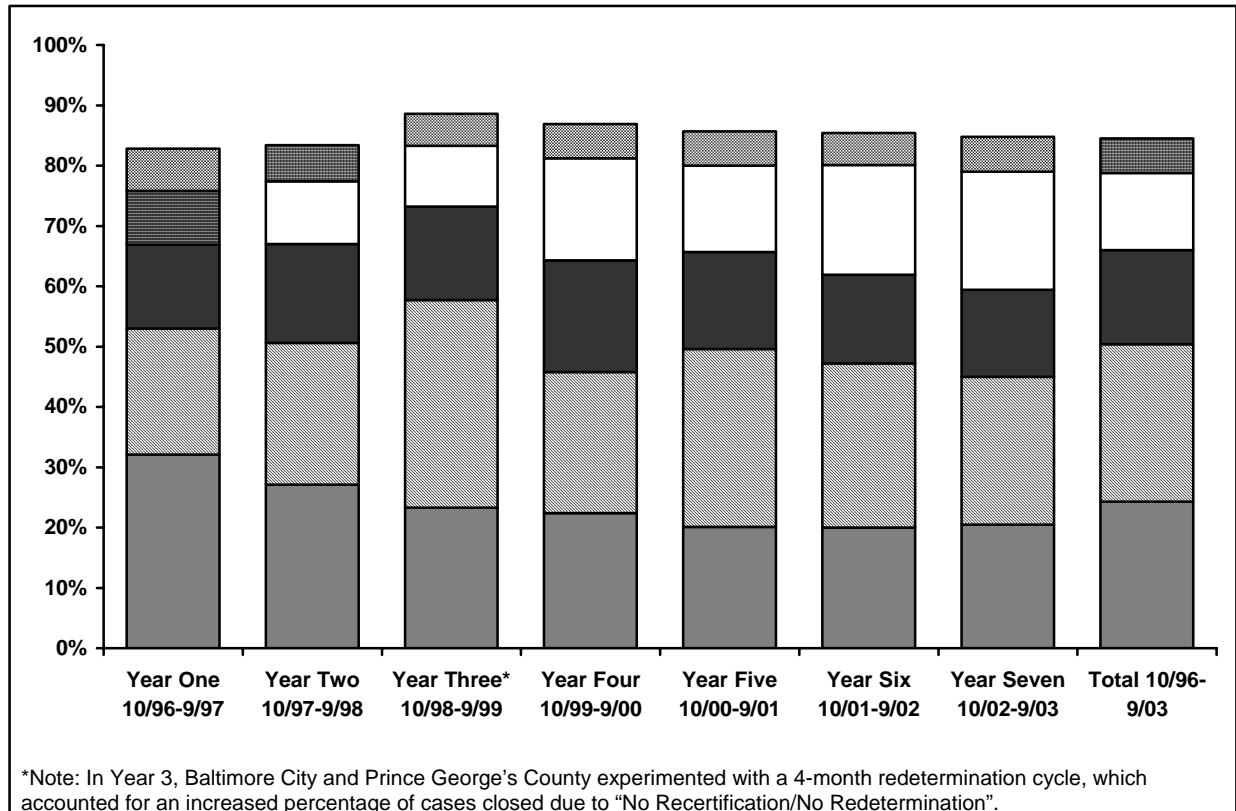
codes do not always fully capture the events surrounding a case closure, but they do provide one important measure: what front-line caseworkers know and document about why a case closed. Also, administratively-recorded case closure codes are correlated with important post-exit outcomes such as employment (Ovwigbo, Tracy, & Born, 2004) and provide the best available measure of full family sanctioning. On the other hand, it has been well-documented that administrative codes grossly understate the percentage of clients who leave welfare for work.

The most frequently recorded case closure codes during the first seven years of FIP are presented graphically in Figure 10, and numerically in Appendix D. Overall, the most common reason for case closure statewide from 1996 to 2003 was “No Recertification/No Redetermination”, accounting for over one-fourth of closures (26.2%). The next most common reason was “Income Above Limit (including started work)”, which accounted for another fourth of administrative closings (24.5%). In addition, about one in seven closures occurred because “Eligibility/Verification Information [was] Not Provided” (15.5%), one in ten closures were due to a full family sanction for non-compliance with work activities (12.5%), and about half that (5.8%) were coded as closed at the request of the customer (“Requested Closure”). Together, these five administrative case closure codes accounted for over eight out of ten closings statewide (84.5%).

Despite some changes in the rank order of these administrative closure codes, they have remained relatively consistent over the seven years. Since year three, “No Recertification/No Redetermination” has been the top closure code, with “Income Above Limit (including started work)” close behind. Also, “Eligibility/Verification Information Not

Provided” was the third most commonly used code until the sixth year of reform, when it moved to fourth and was replaced in the third position by “Work Sanction”. “Not Eligible” has been the fifth most common closure code in all but the second year, when “Requested Closure” accounted for 6.0% of all administrative closure codes.

Figure 10. Top 5 Administrative Closure Codes Statewide: 10/96 – 9/03.



Income Above Limit (including started work) Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided Not Eligible
 No Recertification/No Redetermination Requested Closure Work Sanction

Although the top five administrative closing codes have generally remained consistent across the first seven years of FIP, there has been one notable exception. Specifically, the percent of cases closing because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work requirements has increased steadily from 1996 to 2003. As part of the PRWORA reforms (1996), cash benefits are terminated in Maryland when

recipients do not comply with work participation requirements or fail to cooperate with child support enforcement. Because full family sanctioning was controversial and the incidence of sanctioning has increased over time, a somewhat detailed examination of sanctioning trends is warranted. To that end, Table 1, following this discussion, presents data on the percent of cases closed due to work and child support sanctions in each of the seven years for all cases and separately for Baltimore City and the balance of the state.

As shown in the table, the overall trend has been an increase in both work and child support sanctions, with the percent of cases closed due to work sanctions growing from about one in twenty (5.5%) statewide in the first year of reform to one in five by the seventh year (19.6%). Although still very low, the percent of cases closed due to child support sanctions quadrupled from less than one percent (0.6%) statewide in Year One to almost three percent (2.6%) in Year Seven. Considering the entire seven-year period, we find that about one in ten (12.5%) closures were due to work sanctions and about two percent (1.8%) closed due to a child support sanction.

Looking at local trends in work sanctions, we see that in each of the first three years of reform, work sanctions were less common among Baltimore City closings, averaging about 6.7% versus 10.0% in the 23 counties for that period as a whole. The percent of closings due to work sanctions then leveled off in the counties, but continued to increase in Baltimore City. Thus, in Year Seven, work sanctions accounted for about one in four closings in the City (24.2%) compared to about one in seven closures in the counties (14.2%). The initially lower rates of sanctioning in Baltimore City may be another reflection of the fact that it took longer for welfare reform to be fully

implemented in that large urban area. It is not completely clear why sanctioning rates in the City have reached higher levels than in the other jurisdictions. However, it may be at least partially a reflection of the fact that Baltimore City's caseload has a higher proportion of work-mandatory customers than do other jurisdictions.

Table 1. Full Family Sanctions in Baltimore City & Maryland Counties (10/96-9/03)

	Maryland Counties		Baltimore City		Statewide	
	Work Sanction	Child Support Sanction	Work Sanction	Child Support Sanction	Work Sanction	Child Support Sanction
Year 1 (10/96-9/97)	7.4%	0.9%	1.9%	0.1%	5.5%	0.6%
Year 2 (10/97-9/98)	11.9%	1.8%	8.6%	0.6%	10.4%	1.3%
Year 3 (10/98-9/99)	10.7%	2.3%	9.6%	1.1%	10.1%	1.7%
Year 4 (10/99-9/00)	13.3%	1.8%	16.7%	1.4%	15.2%	1.6%
Year 5 (10/00-9/01)	11.6%	1.8%	16.3%	2.8%	14.3%	2.4%
Year 6 (10/01-9/02)	12.6%	2.5%	22.3%	3.6%	18.2%	3.2%
Year 7 (10/02-9/03)	14.2%	2.6%	24.2%	2.7%	19.6%	2.6%
Total (10/96-9/03)	11.1%	1.8%	13.9%	1.7%	12.5%	1.8%

Conclusions

Utilizing data from the first seven years of Maryland's Family Investment Program, we have examined two key questions regarding welfare case closings: 1) What is the trend over time in the number and proportions of closings both statewide and in each jurisdiction? And 2) Has the profile of closing cases changed over the past seven years? Our analyses reveal that, in general, the first three years of reform were remarkable in terms of high rates of case closings, particularly in Maryland's 23 counties. In the fourth year, the number of closings dropped dramatically, although still remaining above 25,000 throughout the seventh year. Initially, Maryland's 23 counties were closing more cases than Baltimore City and more than would be expected based on their share of the state's caseload. However, during the first three years when the number of closings decreased from one year to the next in the counties, closures in Baltimore City increased so that by the fifth year of reform each jurisdiction's proportion of case closings was very close to its proportion of the active caseload.

For policy makers and program managers, these findings combined with the results from our ongoing *Life After Welfare* study show the success that Maryland jurisdictions have achieved in reducing their TANF caseloads and moving families from welfare to work. Although welfare reform may have taken longer to implement in Baltimore City, by the end of the seventh year, all jurisdictions had closing rates comparable to their caseload shares.

The fact that closings have leveled off in the past three years, both statewide and in Baltimore City, may be indicative of a number of new realities. First, because

caseloads have declined significantly in every jurisdiction, there are simply fewer people whose cases could close than there were in the first few years of FIP.

Second, the leveling off may be an indication that we have now reached the point where the majority of work-ready families have exited the welfare rolls. That is, at least some jurisdictions may be at a point where their caseloads are composed of a core of families such as child only cases who are not likely to move off the rolls quickly and relatively new recipients who are transitioning to work.

Third, it is also quite possible that the effects of the economic recession and slow recovery are still lingering. Economic studies indicate that, historically, welfare and Food Stamp caseloads have been the first affected by an economic downturn and the last to recover.

Our findings regarding case characteristics in many ways mirror the general case closing trends in that most changes occur in the first three to four years. It remains true that the majority of cases exiting TANF consist of an African-American woman in her early thirties and her one or two children, the youngest of whom is about six years old. However, there have been significant changes as well. For example, families leaving TANF today are exiting a significantly shorter welfare spell than their counterparts who exited during the early years of reform. The proportion of exiting cases that are child only has increased as has the proportion headed by an African American payee and the proportion with a child under the age of three. Many of these changes are consistent with changes also found among the active TANF caseload during the welfare reform era (see, for example, Hetling, et al., 2003, forthcoming).

Consistent with the differences observed between Baltimore City and the other 23 jurisdictions in numbers of case closings, we also find differences in how the profile of the typical exiting case has changed. Although all jurisdictions experienced a decline in the length of the welfare spell from which families were exiting, the decline in Baltimore City was most dramatic. In fact, in the early years of reform, the average exiting spell was significantly longer among Baltimore City cases than among cases from the other jurisdictions. However, this difference had disappeared by the seventh year of reform.

Jurisdictions also varied in the proportion of child only cases among their case closures. In the early years of reform, the proportion of child only cases among closings in Maryland's 23 counties increased, while in Baltimore City the proportion was decreasing. In later years, the trend regarding child only cases among closures has remained fairly stable, although the proportion among the active TANF caseload has continued to increase. This finding too may be related to the economy and a reflection of more "traditional" welfare cases entering and then exiting the rolls more often.

Our final set of analyses concerning administrative case closing codes reveal remarkable consistency over time, with one notable exception. In all jurisdictions, the percentage of cases closing because of a full family sanction for non-compliance with work requirements has increased over time, particularly in Baltimore City. Given the severity of full family sanctions and the likely increased focus on work participation, continued attention to patterns and outcomes of sanctioning is warranted.

In closing, we offer two general conclusions or recommendations for policy makers and program managers. First, our findings as well as those of several other

studies show that welfare reform implementation took longer in Baltimore City, although it eventually reached the same pace as the other jurisdictions in terms of closings.

Given that Baltimore City's caseload remains significantly larger than the other jurisdictions and its problems and challenges somewhat unique, we would expect that it could take longer for Baltimore City to fully implement any new reforms enacted as part of TANF reauthorization. This possibility should be kept in mind as new performance measures and goals are set, particularly because, due to the size of its caseload, Baltimore City exerts enormous influence on statewide results.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the data presented here on closing cases and elsewhere on current TANF recipients indicate that the composition of today's welfare caseload differs in some important respects from the composition of the AFDC caseload when PRWORA was enacted. As policy makers and program managers craft the next phase of welfare reform, it is important to keep these changes in mind. That is, although the goal may remain the same – to move families from welfare to self-sufficiency – the starting place may be different.

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**Appendix A. Jurisdictional Percent of Closings Relative to Percent of Caseload:
October 1996 – September 2003**

Jurisdiction	Year One		Year Two		Year Three		Year Four		Year Five		Year Six		Year Seven		Total	
	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload
Balt. City	33.6%	50.7%	43.3%	54.9%	53.9%	57.7%	55.0%	59.7%	58.1%	60.5%	57.9%	58.0%	54.1%	55.1%	49.4%	55.9%
Difference	-17.1%		-11.6%		-3.8%		-4.7%		-2.4%		-0.1%		-1.0%		-6.5%	
Pr. George's	17.0%	15.9%	17.5%	15.6%	15.4%	13.4%	10.0%	11.4%	9.7%	11.3%	9.4%	12.0%	11.5%	13.1%	13.6%	13.7%
Difference	1.1%		1.9%		2.0%		-1.4%		-1.6%		-2.6%		-1.6%		-0.1%	
22 Counties	49.4%	33.4%	39.1%	29.5%	30.7%	28.9%	35.1%	28.9%	32.2%	28.2%	32.7%	30.0%	34.4%	31.8%	37.0%	30.4%
Difference	16.0%		9.6%		1.8%		6.2%		4.0%		2.7%		2.6%		6.6%	
Allegany	1.6%	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%
Difference	0.7%		0.3%		0.1%		0.1%		0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.2%	
Anne Arundel	4.7%	4.2%	5.1%	3.8%	3.4%	3.5%	4.4%	3.4%	4.5%	3.5%	4.8%	4.1%	4.7%	4.5%	4.5%	3.9%
Difference	0.5%		1.3%		-0.1%		1.0%		1.0%		0.7%		0.2%		0.6%	
Balt. County	12.1%	8.9%	10.7%	8.9%	9.7%	9.2%	11.2%	9.3%	9.6%	8.2%	9.3%	8.1%	8.2%	7.8%	10.3%	8.7%
Difference	3.2%		1.8%		0.5%		1.9%		1.4%		1.2%		0.4%		1.6%	
Calvert	1.0%	0.6%	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%
Difference	0.4%		0.2%		0.0%		0.2%		0.1%		0.0%		0.2%		-0.1%	
Caroline	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Difference	0.2%		0.1%		0.0%		0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	
Carroll	1.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	1.0%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.9%	0.6%
Difference	0.5%		0.2%		0.1%		0.4%		0.2%		0.2%		0.2%		0.3%	
Cecil	1.6%	1.0%	1.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	1.1%	0.8%	1.3%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.0%	1.2%	0.8%
Difference	0.6%		0.5%		0.2%		0.3%		0.5%		0.2%		0.2%		0.4%	
Charles	2.1%	1.6%	1.6%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.2%
Difference	0.5%		0.3%		0.0%		-0.1%		0.1%		-0.1%		0.0%		0.3%	
Dorchester	1.2%	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	1.1%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%
Difference	0.5%		0.3%		-0.1%		0.3%		0.2%		0.1%		0.2%		0.2%	
Frederick	2.0%	1.0%	1.2%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	1.4%	1.0%
Difference	1.0%		0.3%		0.1%		0.2%		0.2%		0.1%		0.2%		0.4%	
Garrett	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%
Difference	0.2%		0.1%		0.1%		0.1%		0.1%		0.0%		0.2%		0.1%	
Harford	2.6%	1.7%	1.9%	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	2.1%	2.3%	2.6%	2.6%	2.0%	1.8%
Difference	0.9%		0.4%		-0.1%		0.0%		-0.1%		-0.2%		0.0%		0.2%	

**Appendix A. (continued) Jurisdictional Percent of Closings Relative to Percent of Caseload:
October 1996 – September 2003**

Jurisdiction	Year One		Year Two		Year Three		Year Four		Year Five		Year Six		Year Seven		Total	
	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload	% Closings	% Caseload
Howard	1.9%	1.0%	1.1%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	0.8%
<i>Difference</i>	0.9%		0.4%		0.2%		0.2%		0.1%		0.0%		0.1%		0.3%	
Kent	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
<i>Difference</i>	0.2%		0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.1%		0.1%	
Montgomery	6.6%	4.6%	5.1%	3.7%	3.4%	3.3%	3.6%	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	3.5%	3.1%	3.6%	3.3%	4.3%	3.6%
<i>Difference</i>	2.0%		1.4%		0.1%		0.5%		0.2%		0.4%		0.3%		0.7%	
Queen Annes	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
<i>Difference</i>	0.1%		0.1%		0.0%		0.1%		0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.1%	
St. Mary's	1.4%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%
<i>Difference</i>	0.4%		0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		-0.1%		-0.3%		-0.3%		0.0%	
Somerset	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
<i>Difference</i>	0.4%		0.2%		0.0%		0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.1%		0.1%	
Talbot	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
<i>Difference</i>	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.1%		0.1%	
Washington	2.6%	1.2%	1.6%	1.0%	1.3%	1.0%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.0%	1.5%	1.0%
<i>Difference</i>	1.4%		0.6%		0.3%		0.2%		0.0%		0.1%		0.3%		0.5%	
Wicomico	2.7%	1.8%	2.2%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%	2.0%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%
<i>Difference</i>	0.9%		0.6%		0.2%		0.5%		0.2%		0.1%		0.1%		0.3%	
Worcester	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%
<i>Difference</i>	0.4%		0.2%		0.0%		0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.2%	

Appendix B. Selected Case and Payee Characteristics among Closing Cases: October 1996 – September 2003

	Year One 10/96-9/97	Year Two 10/97-9/98	Year Three 10/98-9/99	Year Four 10/99-9/00	Year Five 10/00-9/01	Year Six 10/01-9/02	Year Seven 10/02-9/03
Mean Length of Exiting Spell							
Baltimore City	35.8 mos	35.2 mos	26.4 mos	17.5 mos	16.1 mos	14.3 mos	11.9 mos
Prince George's County	24.6 mos	24.6 mos	21.2 mos	14.8 mos	16.3 mos	14.2 mos	13.4 mos
22 Counties	19.9 mos	18.2 mos	15.2 mos	12.4 mos	12.2 mos	11.6 mos	10.9 mos
State	26.1 mos	26.7 mos	22.2 mos	15.5 mos	14.8 mos	13.4 mos	11.8 mos
Percent of Child-Only Cases							
Baltimore City	19.0%	13.0%	13.6%	17.5%	17.8%	18.3%	17.8%
Prince George's County	13.8%	13.2%	20.4%	25.6%	29.2%	23.7%	21.2%
22 Counties	13.9%	14.1%	18.7%	25.1%	25.4%	25.5%	24.2%
State	15.6%	13.5%	16.2%	20.3%	21.4%	21.2%	20.4%
Percent with at Least One Child Under 3 Years of Age							
Baltimore City	27.1%	31.6%	36.0%	36.4%	37.2%	36.0%	37.3%
Prince George's County	35.7%	37.3%	35.5%	33.2%	32.3%	37.3%	38.4%
22 Counties	38.9%	41.4%	44.5%	44.3%	43.9%	43.2%	43.7%
State	34.7%	36.7%	38.5%	38.9%	38.9%	38.5%	39.7%
Percent African-American Payees							
Baltimore City	85.5%	87.0%	89.6%	91.4%	91.7%	91.9%	92.2%
Prince George's County	88.4%	89.2%	92.8%	92.8%	93.3%	93.8%	93.9%
22 Counties	48.1%	51.3%	53.7%	54.0%	54.2%	54.5%	54.5%
State	66.0%	73.1%	78.9%	78.3%	79.7%	79.8%	79.4%

Appendix C. Statewide Closing Case Characteristics: October 1996 – September 2003

	Year One 10/96-9/97	Year Two 10/97-9/98	Year Three 10/98-9/99	Year Four 10/99-9/00	Year Five 10/00-9/01	Year Six 10/01-9/02	Year Seven 10/02-9/03	Total
Number of Closing Cases	41206	40773	37997	26853	26494	26895	25348	225566
Length of Exiting Spell***								
12 months or less	41.9%	46.7%	59.0%	70.6%	71.2%	74.5%	77.6%	60.5%
13 – 24 months	25.0%	21.0%	17.8%	16.3%	16.7%	15.2%	14.4%	18.7%
25 – 36 months	11.9%	10.7%	7.0%	4.6%	5.3%	4.6%	3.6%	7.4%
37 – 48 months	6.7%	6.3%	4.1%	2.2%	1.9%	2.1%	1.7%	4.0%
49 – 60 months	3.8%	4.1%	2.9%	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%	.9%	2.4%
More than 60 months	10.7%	11.3%	9.3%	4.8%	3.8%	2.7%	1.9%	7.1%
Mean Spell Length***	26.11	26.67	22.18	15.46	14.82	13.42	11.75	19.80
Median Spell Length	14.39	13.08	9.96	8.02	9.73	8.91	7.76	10.32
Range of Spell Length	0-416	0-429	0-312	0-444	0-500	0-512	0-459	0-512
Number of Adults***								
None (Child-Only)	15.6%	13.5%	16.2%	20.3%	21.4%	21.2%	20.4%	17.8%
One	81.7%	83.8%	81.7%	77.5%	76.3%	76.3%	76.7%	79.7%
Two or More	2.7%	2.7%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.5%	2.9%	2.5%
Number of Children***								
0	2.3%	2.7%	3.1%	3.1%	3.6%	3.6%	3.5%	3.1%
1	48.4%	46.5%	46.0%	46.2%	46.7%	47.1%	47.2%	46.9%
2	29.6%	29.3%	28.5%	28.4%	28.1%	27.7%	28.0%	28.6%
3 or more	19.7%	21.4%	22.3%	22.3%	21.7%	21.6%	21.3%	21.4%
Size of Assistance Unit***								
1	11.6%	11.2%	13.2%	15.7%	16.9%	16.6%	16.4%	14.1%
2	42.5%	40.5%	39.1%	37.7%	37.8%	38.6%	38.5%	39.5%
3	26.8%	27.2%	26.2%	25.4%	24.7%	24.4%	24.6%	25.8%
4 or more	19.1%	21.1%	21.4%	21.2%	20.6%	20.4%	20.5%	20.6%
Mean***	2.63	2.70	2.69	2.65	2.62	2.61	2.62	2.65
Median	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Range	1-12	1-12	1-13	1-14	1-16	1-15	1-12	1-16

Appendix D. Statewide Household Characteristics: October 1996 – September 2003

	Year One 10/96-9/97	Year Two 10/97-9/98	Year Three 10/98-9/99	Year Four 10/99-9/00	Year Five 10/00-9/01	Year Six 10/01-9/02	Year Seven 10/02-9/03	Total
Number of Closing Cases	41206	40773	37997	26853	26494	26895	25348	225566
Payee Race/Ethnicity***								
% Caucasian	30.0%	23.0%	19.3%	20.0%	18.7%	18.3%	18.5%	21.6%
% African American	66.0%	73.1%	78.9%	78.3%	79.6%	79.8%	79.4%	75.8%
Payee Gender***								
% Female	95.8%	95.8%	95.7%	95.5%	95.6%	95.3%	95.1%	95.6%
% Male	4.2%	4.2%	4.3%	4.5%	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%	4.4%
Age of Payee								
Mean***	31.66	32.42	33.17	33.92	34.17	34.11	33.85	33.19
Median	30.28	30.89	31.52	31.99	32.22	31.97	31.69	31.37
Standard Deviation	9.13	9.99	10.77	11.42	11.74	11.82	11.69	10.87
Range	18-88	18-89	18-90	18-86	18-89	18-86	18-86	18-90
Estimated Age at First Birth								
Mean***			21.60	21.88	21.95	21.87	21.92	21.82
Median			19.98	20.17	20.22	20.12	20.13	20.11
Standard Deviation			5.45	5.59	5.69	5.66	5.69	5.60
Range			13-50	13-50	13-50	10-49	11-49	10-50
% who gave birth before 18*			26.3%	25.1%	25.1%	26.0%	25.5%	25.7%
% who gave birth before 21***			58.9%	56.9%	56.8%	57.6%	57.4%	57.7%
Age of Youngest Child								
Mean***	5.83	5.77	5.69	5.86	6.01	6.07	5.98	5.87
Median	4.55	4.51	4.41	4.48	4.59	4.55	4.32	4.49
Standard Deviation	4.54	4.60	4.65	4.84	4.93	4.97	4.99	4.76
Range	0-18	0-18	0-18	0-18	0-18	0-18	0-18	0-18
% cases with a child under 3*	34.7%	36.7%	38.5%	38.9%	38.9%	38.5%	39.7%	37.7%

Appendix E. Statewide Case Closing Reasons: October 1996 – September 2003

Year	Top 5 Closing Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Year One (October 1996 – September 1997) (n=41,206)	Income Above Limit (including started work)	12,893	32.1%
	No Recertification/No Redetermination	8,386	20.9%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	5,585	13.9%
	Requested Closure	3,577	8.9%
	Not Eligible	2,823	7.0%
Year Two (October 1997 – September 1998) (n=40,773)	Income Above Limit (including started work)	11,082	27.3%
	No Recertification/No Redetermination	9,551	23.5%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	6,614	16.3%
	Work Sanction	4,238	10.4%
	Requested Closure	2,452	6.0%
Year Three (October 1998 – September 1999) (n=37,997)	No Recertification/No Redetermination	13,012	34.4%
	Income Above Limit (including started work)	8,834	23.3%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	5,885	15.5%
	Work Sanction	3,819	10.1%
	Not Eligible	1,999	5.3%
Year Four (October 1999 – September 2000) (n=26,853)	No Recertification/No Redetermination	6,467	24.1%
	Income Above Limit (including started work)	6,269	23.4%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	4,758	17.7%
	Work Sanction	4,071	15.2%
	Not Eligible	1,657	6.2%
Year Five (October 2000 – September 2001) (n=26,494)	No Recertification/No Redetermination	7,820	29.5%
	Income Above Limit (including started work)	5,338	20.1%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	4,257	16.1%
	Work Sanction	3,801	14.3%
	Not Eligible	1,511	5.7%
Year Six (October 2001 – September 2002) (n=26,895)	No Recertification/No Redetermination	7,327	27.2%
	Income Above Limit (including started work)	5,378	20.0%
	Work Sanction	4,900	18.2%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	3,947	14.7%
	Not Eligible	1,416	5.3%
Year Seven (October 2002 – September 2003) (n=25,348)	No Recertification/No Redetermination	6,206	24.5%
	Income Above Limit (including started work)	5,189	20.5%
	Work Sanction	4,973	19.6%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	3,644	14.4%
	Not Eligible	1,470	5.8%
Total (October 1996 – September 2003) (n=225,566)	No Recertification/No Redetermination	58,769	26.2%
	Income Above Limit (including started work)	54,983	24.5%
	Eligibility/Verification Information Not Provided	34,690	15.5%
	Work Sanction	28,028	12.5%
	Requested Closure	12,998	5.8%