

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



**Grandparent Caregivers Program:
Annual Status Report, CY2016**
January 30, 2017

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A. Introduction & Program Profile

Introduction

This is the 10th annual report for the Grandparent Caregivers Program (GCP), which the District of Columbia established under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005. The Budget Support Act of 2009 moved the program out of pilot status, creating a permanent Grandparent Caregivers Program. Since the program inception in March 2006, the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) has served as program administrator. The Establishment Act requires that the annual report includes a specific set of statistics (Section 3) and recommendations for program improvement (Section 4).

Program Profile

The Grandparent Caregivers Program provides a monthly subsidy for eligible DC residents with low incomes who are raising their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. Caregivers use the financial assistance to help care for the child residing with them in the District who might otherwise enter the foster care system. In calendar year (CY) 2016, the program served 855 children total, with a monthly average total of 730 children and 481 families served.

Table 1: GCP Statistics

	CY2014	CY2015	CY2016
Program funding (subsidy portion)	\$4.64	\$4.6	\$4.8 ¹
New applications received (from families)	84	78	85
New subsidies awarded (to children)	129	92	127
Reapplications received (from existing families)	0	5	5
Reapplication subsidies awarded (to children)	0	5	9
Children receiving both GCP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at End of Year	551	553	556
Total number of children who received subsidy in the calendar year	711	785	855
Denials due to ineligibility	5	4	3
Denials due to funding (applications on the waiting list as of End of Year)	0	0	0
Subsidies transferred to caregivers	n/a	1	2
Subsidies terminated by program or caregiver	70	70	133 ²
Substantiated instances of fraud	0	0	2
Children removed from household while receiving subsidy	3	2	5 ³

¹ There was an increase to the number of children/youth receiving subsidy in the District. In response, the District Council approved an increase to the GCP subsidy budget for FY2016. The increase in subsidy is aimed at increasing family stability and child well-being.

² This number of terminations reflects the number of youth aging out, provider's requested to be removed and provider's that no longer qualified for the program.

³ This number reflects three families and five children who were removed in CY2016 while receiving the subsidy. Three children were removed for substantiated abuse and neglect. Two children were brought into foster care, as the caregivers were no longer willing to provide care.

B. Program Achievements

Achieved Performance Indicator

In 2012, CFSA established and the local child-serving community rallied around a strategic agenda known as the Four Pillars. It is a bold, strategic agenda to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families at every step of their involvement with the District’s child welfare agency. Each pillar highlights a values-based foundation, a set of evidence-based strategies, and a series of specific outcomes and targets. The Four Pillars include: (1) Narrowing the Front Door; (2) Temporary Safe Haven; (3) Well Being; and (4) Exit to Permanence.

The Grandparent Caregivers Program cuts across all these pillars. The program is especially valuable in providing families the support they need to prevent children from entering into foster care. The following chart shows the outcome and performance indicator achieved for the program.

Table 2		
<i>Outcome:</i> Families will be assisted to remain together and prevent out-of-home placement		
Performance Indicator	Actual 2016	2016 Target
Children receiving GCP services will be diverted from entering out of home placement	99% ⁴	95%

Client Testimonials

The Grandparent Caregivers Program has made a significant impact in the lives of many District families. A number of program participants offered positive feedback this year expressing their gratitude for the program.

“Thank you for the help that you’ve given me. Without it I don’t think I would have made it with three children that I now have.” – Grandmother of three children

“I am very thankful for the Grandparent Caregivers Program. This program has been very helpful to my great-grandson and I.” – Grandmother of one child

“As a substitute teacher, I am not paid through the summer months. The financial assistance given to us through the program was the sole income we received during that time. The financial help provided for all of our needs to get us through until I was able to resume work in the fall.” – Grandmother of three children

“...May this program continue to be a resource to bless grandparents who carry the big responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.” – Grandmother of two

⁴ Out of the 855 children served in CY2016, there were only five children removed as a result of a substantiation of abuse or neglect by Child Protection Services or were brought into foster care by an unwilling or unable caregiver.

C. Report

1. Applications Filed

In 2016, the GCP received 85 new applications on behalf of 122 children.⁵ In addition, five existing GCP participants applied to add nine children to their subsidies, totaling 131 children in 2016.

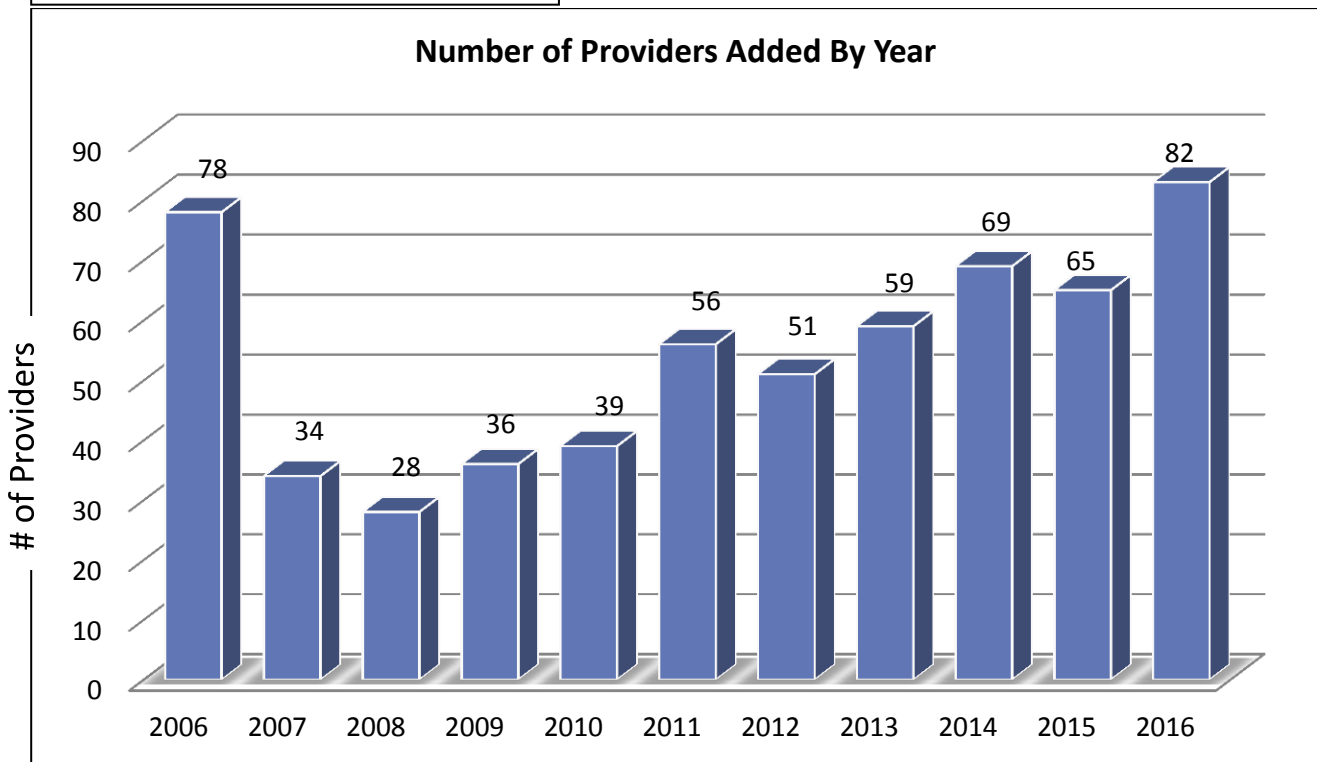
2. Subsidies Awarded

Out of the 85 new applications in 2016 (one application equals one family), 82 were approved; this resulted in a total of 118 new children enrolling in GCP. Including the nine (9) children added to existing subsidies in 2016, there were a total of 127 new children enrolled in GCP for 2016.

A full subsidy payment (without offsets⁶) is \$24.79 per day for children younger than age 12 and \$27.92 per day for children older than 12. During 2016, a participant in the GCP could expect to receive an average daily rate of \$19.83 per child or an average 30-day month rate of \$594.90 per child. This is consistent with the 2012 average rates and up from the 2011 average daily rate of \$14.96 per child or an average 30-day month rate of \$448.80 per child.⁷ The current average number of children per family participating in the program is two (2), and the average age of children currently in the program is 10.

Table 3 illustrates that 82 new providers/caregivers began receiving the GCP subsidy in 2016. This is the highest number of new applications awarded in a year since the creation of the GCP.

Table 3



⁵Potential applicants can receive an application by calling the program directly or downloading the application from the CFSA website (www.cfsa.dc.gov). CFSA has also provided application information to community partners so they can inform prospective caregivers about the program.

⁶Caregivers not receiving other government subsidies for the child such as TANF and SSI benefits.

⁷The rate has remained the same since 2012.

3. Families Receiving the Subsidy, TANF, and SSI

Out of the 855 children receiving a GCP subsidy in 2016, 556 (77%) also received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This percentage has been relatively steady throughout the life of the program. In addition, 44 children (6%) received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which did not change from the previous year. Pursuant to the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005, the program offsets GCP subsidy amounts for these two groups of children by the amount they receive in TANF or SSI. However, the 36 children (5%) who receive Social Security survivor benefits from a deceased parent receive a full GCP subsidy.

4. Denials Due to Ineligibility

CFSA deemed only three applications ineligible in 2016. Reasons included exceeding program income requirements, inability to verify the relationship between the prospective provider and child, and the child's parent residing in the home. None of these applicants requested a Fair Hearing.

5. Denials Due to Lack of Appropriate Funding

CFSA did not have to deny any applications for lack of funding.

5a. Subsidies Transferred to a Relative Caregiver

During the administering of the Grandparent Caregivers Program, sometimes eligible caregivers become unable to provide appropriate care to their charges due to death or failing mental and physical health. Pursuant to the newly enacted Grandparent Caregivers Program Relative Subsidy Transfer Amendment Act of 2015 (L21-40), CFSA now has the ability to transfer a subsidy from an eligible caregiver to another relative who does not meet the initial Grandparent Caregiver requirements, but is willing to care for the child. This change allows children to remain safely in the care of relatives and mitigate their risk of entry into foster care. In 2016, subsidies were transferred for two caregivers. One transfer was due to the failing health of a caregiver and the other was due to the death of a caregiver.

6. Estimated Eligible Caretakers & Estimated Grandparents Acting as Caregivers⁸

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center, there were 8,000 District children younger than age 18 living in grandparent-led households and an additional 5,000 District children living in households led by a relative caregiver in 2015. When compared to children in non-relative care, they have more stability, are more likely to maintain connections with siblings, preserve their cultural heritage, and maintain community bonds.⁹

7. Demographics

Table 4 shows the participating families in the GCP are represented by four primary caregiver types: grandmothers, grandfathers, great aunts and great uncles. The majority of head of households are grandmothers at 430 (92%).

⁸ This information is reflective of the Annual Grand families Report by Generation United, which has not been updated for 2016.

⁹ "Time for Reform: Support Relatives in Providing Foster Care and Permanent Families for Children." Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now and Generations United, Washington, DC. 2007 and Conway, Tiffany and Rutledge Q. Hudson. "Is Kinship Care Good for Kids?" Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC. 2007.

Table 4

Number of Caregivers by Relationship

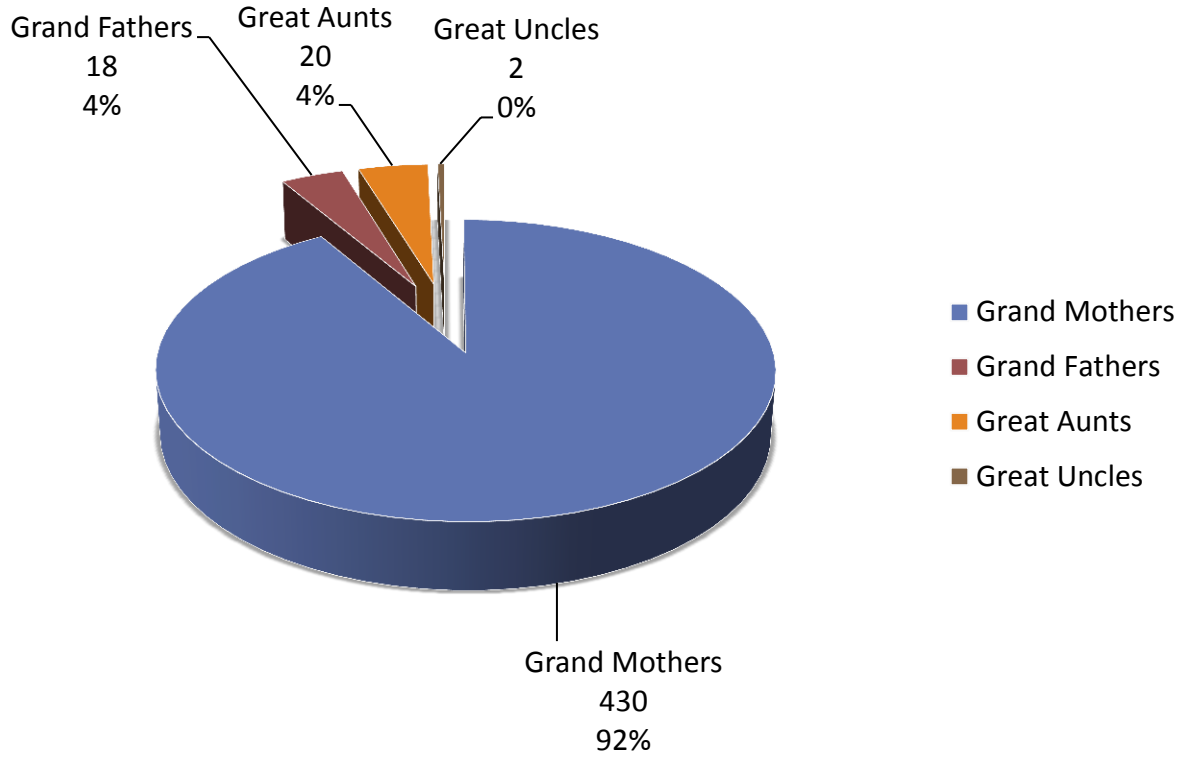


Table 5 shows currently Wards 7 and 8 represent the largest percentage of families participating in the Grandparent Caregivers Program. Ward 7 is home to 139 families (29%) while Ward 8 has 187 families (40%). The total number of caregivers across all Wards is 470.

Table 5

Percentage of Caregivers by Ward

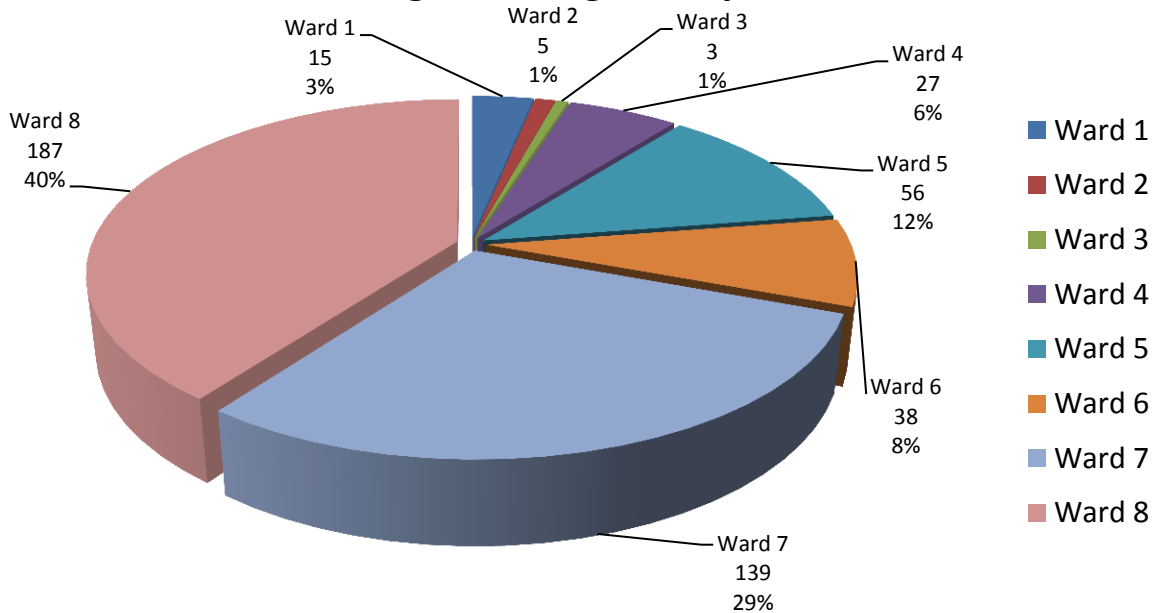
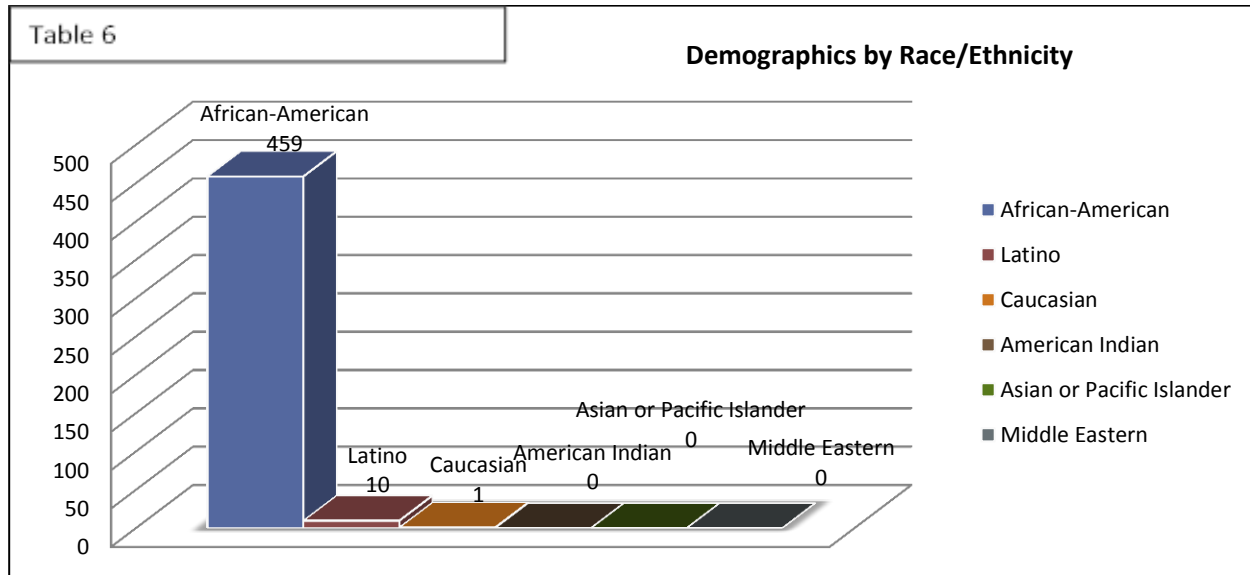
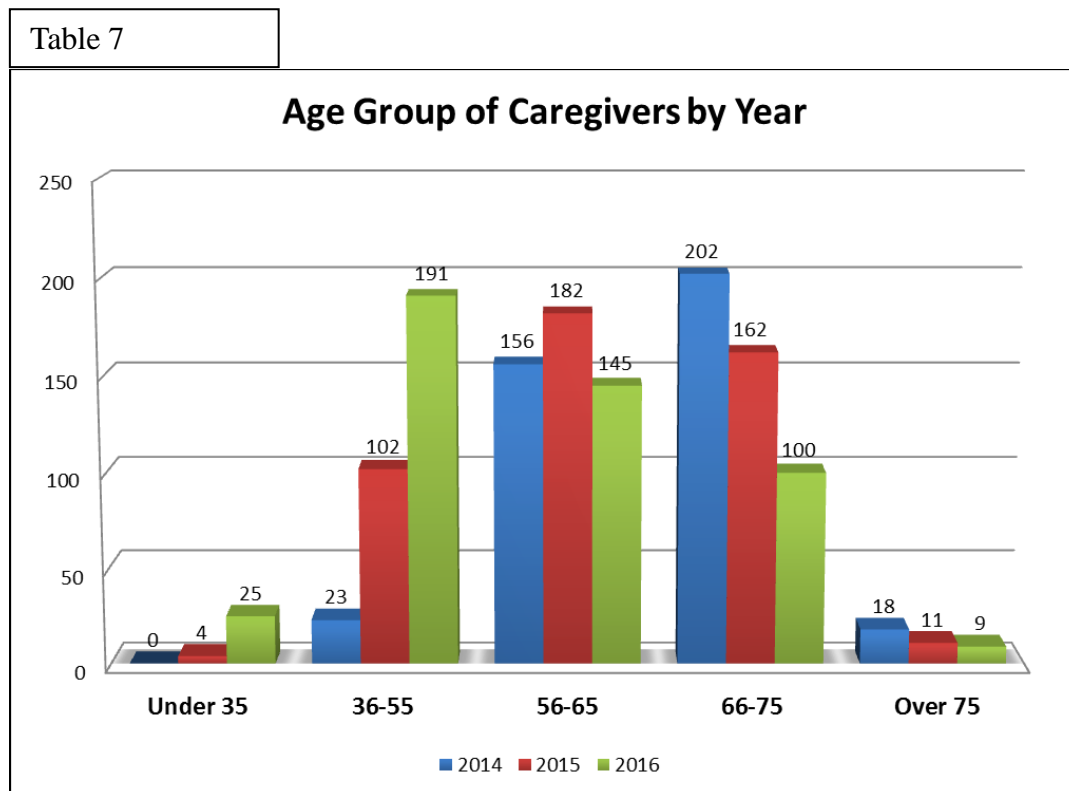


Table 6 shows the majority of households in the Grandparent Caregivers Program are African-American families representing a total of 459 (98%). There were a total of 10 Latino families (2%) and one Caucasian family.



The caregivers in the program vary significantly in age. Table 7 shows the majority of the caregivers are age 65 and under. A total of 46% of caregivers are younger than 55 years old. The median age of caregivers in the Grandparent Caregivers Program for 2016 was 47. This was a significant change from the prior year with a median age of 61. This could be attributed to the increase in the number of caregivers that are between the ages of 36-55 in 2016.



8. Terminations and Aging Out

Termination statistics are based on individual children, as the circumstances of one child may change and result in termination without affecting other children in the household. Of the 133 children who exited the program during 2016, a total of 65 youth exited the program due to reaching the age of 18, or aging out of the foster care system. The remaining 68 children were terminated for one of the following reasons:

- Death of caregiver.¹⁰
- Another person assumed care and did not reside in the District.
- Caregiver failed to recertify.
- CFSA removed children as part of an abuse/neglect investigation and substantiation.
- The caregiver's household income increased, exceeding eligibility requirements.
- Birth parent moved back into the home and the family did not qualify for an exception as outlined in the DC Code.

In 2016, there was one Fair Hearing appeal request submitted at the end of the year. The Fair Hearing will take place in 2017.

9. Substantiated Instances of Fraud

In 2016, there were two instances of fraud. During the annual recertification process, it was discovered that both participants falsified documents to reflect a District residence.

Both were terminated from the GCP and reported to the TANF office at the DC Department of Human Services (DHS).

10. Children Removed from Households while Receiving Subsidy

Out of the 855 children served in 2016, there were only five children removed (1%). Two children were brought into foster care because the grandparents were no longer willing to provide care. One instance occurred in March and the other occurred in July. In August, three children (one household/family) were removed for substantiated sexual abuse and neglect. All cases involving removal were investigated by CFSA Child Protective Services.

11. Recommendations for Program Improvement

Program Survey

At the end of November 2016, surveys were mailed out to caregivers in the program. The survey results will provide the current needs of the families we serve. The survey is set to conclude at the end of January 2017. Upon complete review, we will identify the resources needed and establish the necessary linkages.

¹⁰The death of the caregiver resulted in two children relocating out of the District to live with relatives.

D. GCP Population & Subsidy Overview

Table 8 includes various data points, such as the number of new applicants and children, the number of terminations, and the amount of subsidy paid monthly.

Statistics	Table 8: Grandparent Caregivers Monthly Data												
	Jan '16	Feb '16	Mar '16	Apr '16	May '16	June '16	July '16	Aug '16	Sept '16	Oct '16	Nov '16	Dec '16	CY '16 Totals
New Applications	5	6	2	11	3	8	5	8	9	8	12	8	85
New Applications (# of Children)	6	11	15	12	9	8	7	5	8	13	15	13	122
# of Approved Applications	9	9	14	4	10	3	0	14	0	13	3	3	82
# of Children Approved	13	11	19	16	11	10	0	17	0	18	8	4	127
# of Denied Applications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
# of Terminations	1	2	2	4	5	8	8	5	9	3	6	15	68
# of Age-outs	10	5	5	2	4	3	2	5	5	10	9	5	65
# of Appeals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
# Waitlisted Due To Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average Processing Time	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days
# of Providers Receiving Subsidy	480	475	481	492	489	492	490	482	475	466	470	471	481 ¹¹
# of Children Receiving Subsidy	723	714	729	743	744	743	742	734	721	713	720	718	730 ¹²
Total Subsidy Amount Paid	\$438,641.13	\$414,555.87	\$437,906.25	\$437,906.25	\$448,209.74	\$438,713.24	\$446,029.27	\$441,104.61	\$437,950.48	\$446,029.27	\$425,203.69	\$438,908.04	\$5,251,157.84

¹¹Numbers based on a 12-month average.

¹²Numbers based on a 12-month average.