

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Grandparent Caregivers Program:

Annual Status Report, CY2018

February 28, 2019



Child and Family Services Agency

D.C. Child and Family Services Agency

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Program Profile

This is the 12th annual report for the Grandparent Caregivers Program (GCP), established by the District of Columbia under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005 (D.C. Law 16–69; D.C. Official Code § 4–251.02 *et seq.*). The Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Support Act of 2009 moved the program out of pilot status, creating a permanent Grandparent Caregivers Program. Since the program’s inception in March 2006, the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) serves as program administrator. The Establishment Act requires that the annual report include recommendations for program improvement (page 9) and a specific set of statistics (page 10).

Program Profile

The Grandparent Caregivers Program provides a monthly subsidy for eligible low-income District residents raising their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. Absent this subsidy, caregivers might lack the financial resources to care for the children in their care resulting in entry into the foster care system. In calendar year (CY) 2018, the program served 900 children, with a monthly average of 799 children (512 families) served.

	CY2016	CY2017	CY2018
Program funding ¹ (subsidy portion)	\$4.8M	\$5.7M ²	\$5.8M ³
New applications received (from families)	85	89	111
New applications received (from children)	122	151	144
New subsidies awarded (to children)	127	138	129
Reapplications received (from existing families)	5	5	11
Reapplication subsidies awarded (to children)	5	9	15
Children receiving both GCP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at End of Year	556	661	667
Total number of children who received subsidy in the calendar year	785	855	900
Denials due to ineligibility	4	3	10
Denials due to funding (applications on the waiting list at End of Year)	0	0	0
Subsidies transferred to caregivers	2	1	1
Subsidies terminated by program or caregiver	70	133 ⁴	101 ⁵
Substantiated instances of fraud	2	0	0
Children removed from household while receiving subsidy	5	1 ⁶	4 ⁷

¹ Program funding dollar amounts are in millions.

² Number of children/youth receiving a subsidy increased. In response, District Council approved an increase to the GCP subsidy budget for FY2017. It aimed to increase family stability and child well-being.

³ Number of children/youth receiving a subsidy increased. In response, District Council approved an increase to the GCP subsidy budget for FY2018. It aimed to increase family stability and child well-being.

⁴ Reflects youth aging out, provider’s request to be removed, and providers who no longer qualified for the program.

⁵ Reflects youth aging out, provider’s request to be removed, and providers who no longer qualified for the program.

⁶ Reflects one family and one child who was removed in CY2017 while receiving the subsidy. CFSA removed one child for substantiated abuse/neglect.

⁷ Reflects one family and four children who were removed in CY2018 while receiving the subsidy. CFSA removed four children

Chapter 2: Program Achievements

Achieved Performance Indicator

In 2012, CFSA established 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 is a valuable component of the Four Pillars strategy in that it provides families the support they need to prevent children from entering foster care as Table 2 shows.

Performance Indicator	2018 Actual	2018 Target
Children receiving GCP services will be diverted from entering out of home placement	99% ⁸	95%

Client Testimonials

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

The subsidy program has afforded our family the opportunity to address growing expenses associated with teenagers.

– Grandmother of two children

Since being in the program, I have been able to provide my grandchildren with access to more activities (dance, summer camp, school trips).

– Grandmother of three children

Learning about the program came at the right time. My family was experiencing financial hardship, but since coming into the program we have been able to get back on track. I am so thankful for all the assistance that the staff provides and being able to receive the additional financial support.

– Grandmother of three children

The benefits that my family received were so helpful. My granddaughter has recently aged out, but without the program I do not know what we would have done.

– Grandmother of one child

for substantiated abuse/neglect.

⁸ Of the 900 children served in CY2017, CFSA removed four children when the caregiver was unable to continue providing care.

Chapter 3: Report

1) Applications Filed⁹

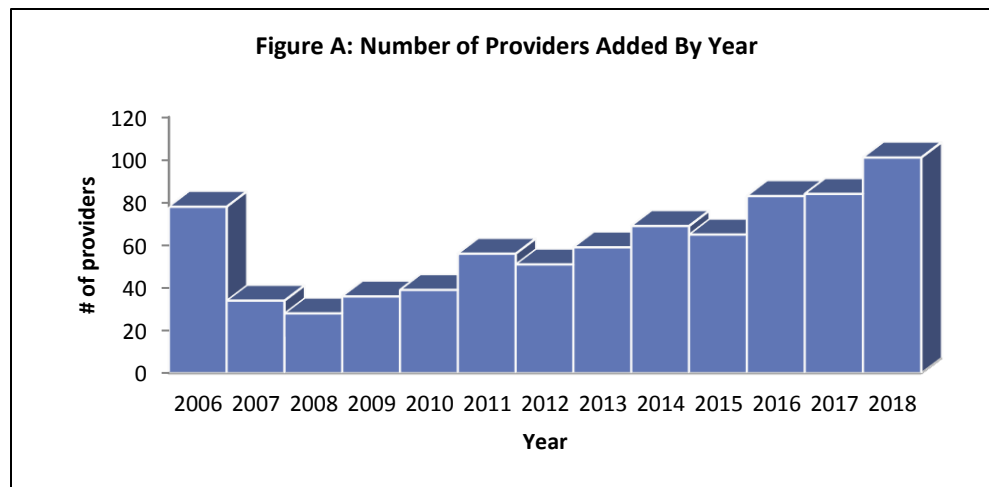
In 2018, the GCP received 111 new applications on behalf of 129 children. In addition, 11 existing GCP participants applied to add 15 children to their subsidies, totaling 144 children in 2018.

2) Subsidies Awarded

Of the 111 new applications in 2018 (one application equals one family), CFSA approved 101, resulting in 119 new children enrolling in GCP. Including the 15 children added to existing subsidies in 2018, a total of 134 new children enrolled in GCP in 2018.

A full subsidy payment (without offsets¹⁰) is \$24.79 per day for children younger than age 12 and \$27.92 per day for children older than 12. During 2018, 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.¹¹ The current average number of children per family participating in the program is two, and the average age of children currently in the program is 10.

Figure A illustrates that 101 new providers/caregivers began receiving the GCP subsidy in 2018. This is the highest number of new applications awarded in a year since the creation of the GCP. This increase may be due to enhanced community awareness of the program. In addition, many of the new clients reported that their kin were either incarcerated or unfit to care for their child due to substance abuse and mental illness.



⁹ Potential 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.

¹⁰Caregivers not receiving other government subsidies for the child such as TANF and SSI benefits.

¹¹The rate has remained the same since 2012.

3) Families Receiving the GCP Subsidy, TANF, and SSI

Of the 900 children receiving a GCP subsidy in 2018, 667 (74%) also received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This percentage is an increase of three percent from the previous year. In addition, 51 children (6%) received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is also an increase by one percent from the previous year. Under 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 received in TANF or SSI. However, the 36 children (4%) who received Social Security survivor benefits from a deceased parent received a full GCP subsidy.

4) Denials Due to Ineligibility

CFSA deemed only 10 applications ineligible in 2018. 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. Only one of those applicants requested a Fair Hearing, which resulted in the appellant winning the appeal.

5) Denials Due to Lack of Appropriated Funding

CFSA did not deny any applications due to lack of funding.

5a) Subsidies Transferred to a Relative Caregiver

In 2018, CFSA transferred one subsidy due to the death of a caregiver.

On occasion, a caregiver becomes unable to provide appropriate care to a child(ren) due to death or failing mental and/or physical health. Under the Grandparent Caregivers Program Relative Subsidy Transfer Amendment Act of 2015 (*D.C. Law 21-40; D.C. Official Code § 4-251.03a*), CFSA may transfer a subsidy to a relative caregiver that is not a grandparent or great aunt/uncle. This change allows children to remain safely in the care of relatives and mitigates their risk of entry into foster care.

6) Estimated Eligible Caretakers and Estimated Grandparents Acting as Caregivers

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center, in 2017, 7,000 District children younger than age 18 were living in grandparent-led households and an additional 9,000 were living in households led by a relative caregiver. Compared to children in non-relative care, they have more stability and are more likely to maintain connections with siblings, preserve their cultural heritage, and maintain community bonds.¹²

¹² "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.

6a) Demographics

Figure B shows families participating in the GCP have four primary caregiver types: grandmothers, grandfathers, great aunts, and great uncles. The majority of heads of household are grandmothers at 459 (90%).

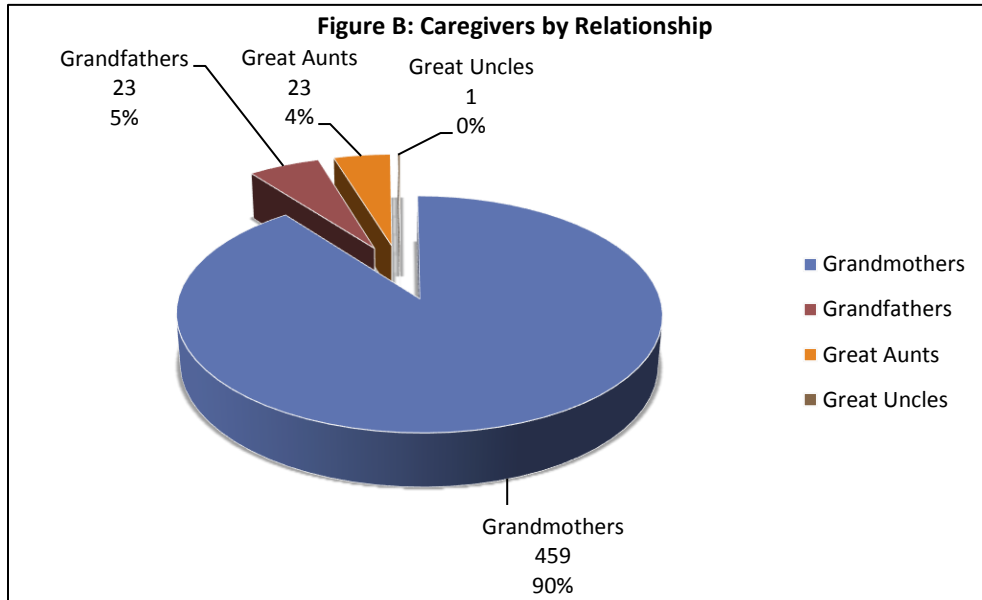


Figure C shows that currently, Wards 7 and 8 represent the largest percentage of families participating in the Grandparent Caregivers Program. Ward 7 is home to 170 families (33%) while Ward 8 has 207 families (40%). The total number of caregivers across all Wards is 512.

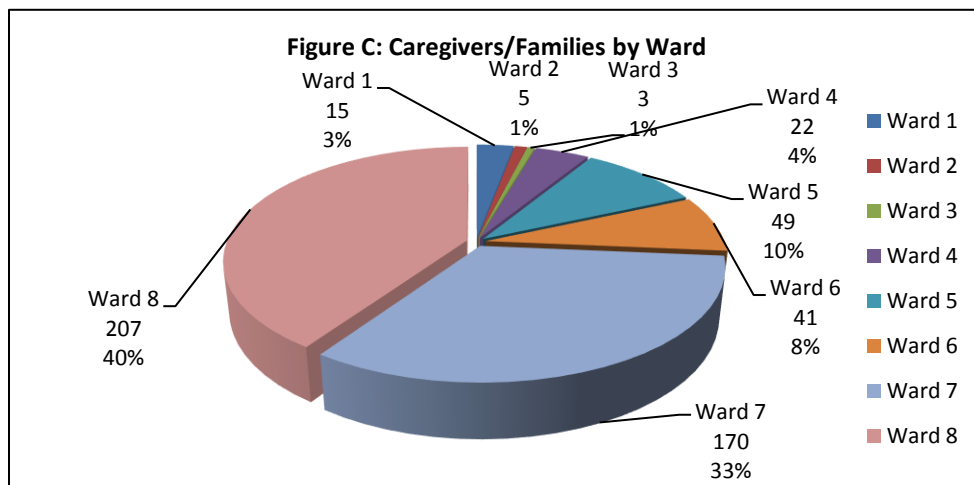
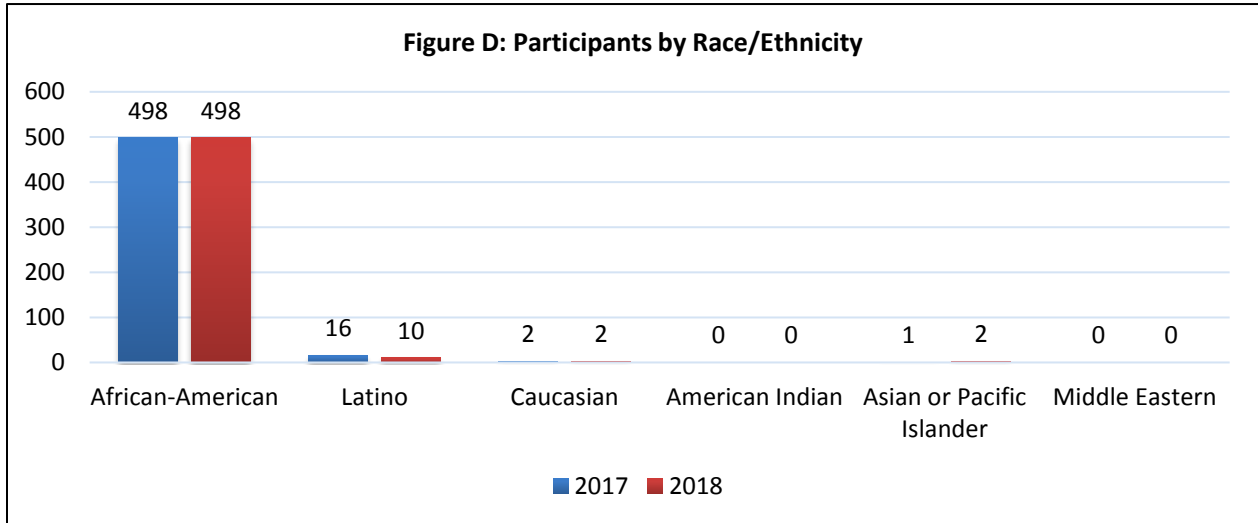
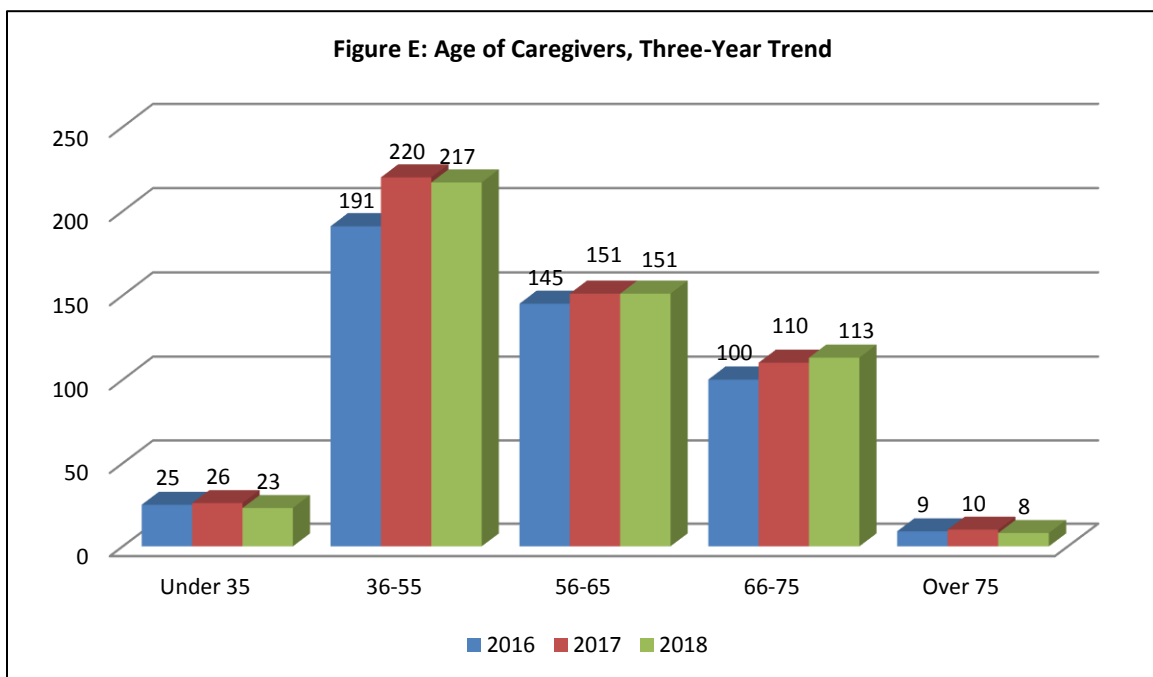


Figure D shows the majority of households in the Grandparent Caregivers Program are African-American families with a much smaller percentage of Latino and Caucasian families. The number of Latino families slightly decreased compared to 2017.



Caregivers in the program vary significantly in age. Figure E shows the majority of the caregivers are age 65 and under. A total of 47 percent of caregivers are 55 years old and younger. The median age of caregivers in the Grandparent Caregivers Program for 2018 was 49. This was consistent with the median age range for 2017. This could be attributed to the steady rate of caregivers between ages 36-55 in 2018.



7) 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 101 children who exited the program during 2018, 56 exited due to reaching age 18. CFSA stopped subsidies to the remaining 45 children for one of the following reasons:

- Death of caregiver.¹³
- Another person assumed care and did not reside in the District.
- Caregiver failed to recertify.
- CFSA removed child 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 District of Columbia Code.

In 2018, no Fair Hearing appeal requests were submitted due to termination of a subsidy.

8) Substantiated Instances of Fraud

In 2018, there were no instances of fraud.

9) Children Removed from Households while Receiving Subsidy

Four children, of the 900 served, were removed as a result of a child protective services investigation.

10) Recommendations for Program Improvement

In 2018, the program entered into a relationship with the Grandfamily Community Life Program at Plaza West Multi-Generational Apartments and the Mission First Housing. A seamless referral and application process was established between Plaza West and CFSA. Plaza West has 50 grandfamily units of which 29 are currently occupied, with GCP in 20 units.

¹³The death of the caregiver resulted in two children relocating out of the District to live with relatives.

Chapter 4: GCP Population & Subsidy Overview

Table 3 includes various data points, such as the number of new applicants and children, the number of subsidy terminations, and the amount of subsidy paid monthly.

Statistics	Table 3: Grandparent Caregivers Monthly Data												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2018 Totals
New Applications	11	9	14	9	10	13	7	6	15	7	6	4	111
New Applications (# of Children)	16	11	19	13	11	19	9	7	17	9	7	6	144
# of Approved Applications	11	9	9	8	7	9	8	6	10	8	6	10	101
# of Children Approved	12	11	15	12	9	9	10	9	15	10	9	13	134
# of Denied Applications	0	0	2	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	0	10
# of Terminations	4	2	2	1	5	3	3	6	6	3	6	4	45
# of Age-outs	2	4	5	8	2	4	3	6	4	3	6	9	56
# of Appeals	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	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	484	485	504	507	512	510	508	515	511	509	513	512	506 ¹⁴
# of Children Receiving Subsidy	738	738	738	768	785	778	771	790	793	793	800	799	774 ¹⁵
Total Subsidy Amount Paid	\$479,751.08	\$437,629.94	\$484,465.55	\$466,161.33	\$485,004.19	\$466,699.80	\$482,011.21	\$489,584.8	\$468,254.55	\$485,708.68	\$464,521.13	\$467,613.85	\$5,677,409.16

The Grandparent Caregiver Program continues to provide support to families in order to avoid entry into the foster care system. The majority of those caregivers who responded to the survey noted that they would not be able to care for their kin if it were not for the GCP subsidy. The increasing numbers of children and caregivers demonstrate this program is a significant part of the safety net which is building family and community resiliency and preventing entry into the child welfare system.

¹⁴ Numbers based on a 12-month average.

¹⁵ Numbers based on a 12-month average.