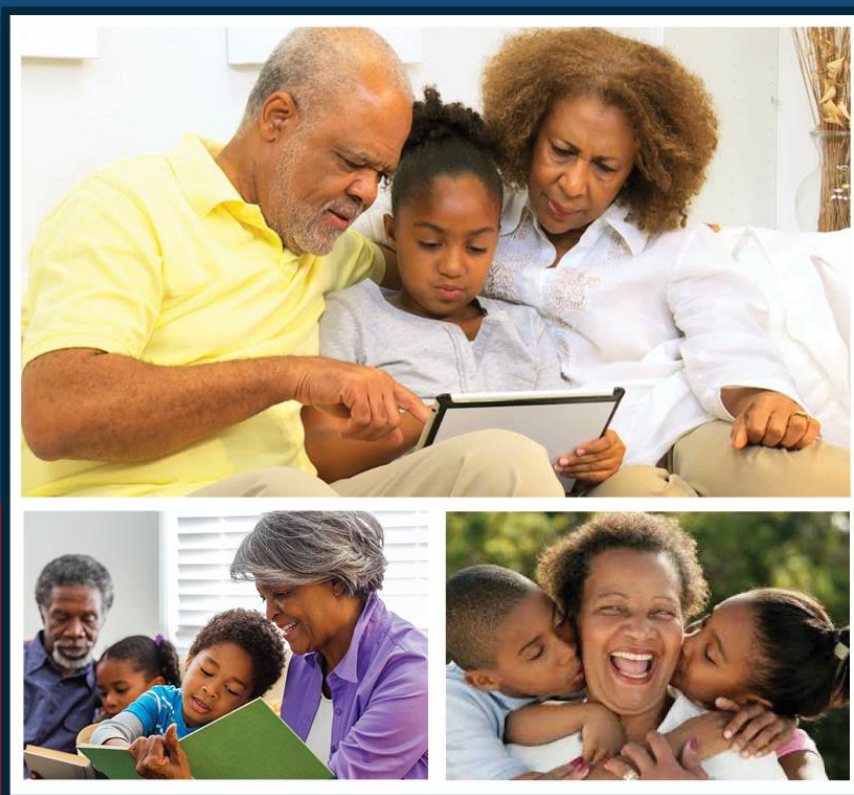


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

# Grandparent Caregivers Program: **Annual Status Report, CY2019**

February 28, 2020



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GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

## Child and Family Services Agency

**D.C. Child and Family Services Agency**

200 I Street SE, Washington, DC 20003 • (202) 442-6100 • [www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov) • <http://dc.mandatedreporter.org>  
[www.fosterdckids.org](http://www.fosterdckids.org) • Facebook/CFSADC • Twitter@DCCFSA

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Program Profile

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> 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) 2019, the program served 905 children, with a monthly average of 806 children (516 families) served.

Table 1: GCP Statistics			
	CY2017	CY2018	CY2019
Program funding <sup>1</sup> (subsidy portion)	\$5.7M <sup>2</sup>	\$5.8M <sup>3</sup>	\$5.8M
New applications received (from families)	89	111	119
New subsidies awarded (to children)	138	129	98
Reapplications received (from existing families)	5	11	10
Reapplication subsidies awarded (to children)	9	15	14
Children receiving both GCP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at End of Year	661	667	654
Total number of children who received subsidy in the calendar year	855	900	905
Denials due to ineligibility	3	10	5
Denials due to funding (applications on the waiting list at End of Year)	0	0	54 <sup>4</sup>
Subsidies transferred to caregivers	1	1	2
Subsidies terminated by program or caregiver	133 <sup>5</sup>	101 <sup>6</sup>	82 <sup>7</sup>
Substantiated instances of fraud	0	0	0
Children removed from household while receiving subsidy	1 <sup>8</sup>	4 <sup>9</sup>	0

<sup>1</sup> Program funding dollar amounts are in millions.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Reflects number of families on waitlist at years end.

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

<sup>6</sup> Reflects youth aging out, provider’s request to be removed, and providers who no longer qualified for the program.

<sup>7</sup> Reflects youth aging out, provider’s request to be removed, and providers who no longer qualified for the program.

<sup>8</sup> Reflects one family and one child who was removed in CY2017 while receiving the subsidy. CFSA removed one child for substantiated abuse/neglect.

<sup>9</sup> Reflects one family and four children who were removed in CY2018 while receiving the subsidy. CFSA removed four children for substantiated abuse/neglect.

## Chapter 2: Program Achievements

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### 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 that provides families the support they need to prevent children from entering foster care as Table 2 illustrates.

Performance Indicator	2019 Actual	2019 Target
Children receiving GCP services will be diverted from entering out of home placement	100% <sup>10</sup>	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.

*"This program has helped relieve a lot of stress off my family by being able to care for basic household needs like clothes, food and transportation. It's very much needed to sustain a healthy home for my family. I am thankful for the Grandparent Caregiver's Program, it has made out lives a lot easier."*  
Grandfather of three children

*"Since entering the program I have been able to move myself and grandchildren to a cleaner, safer environment. With the increase of the cost of living, I can now provide the necessities to my grandchildren without stress or worry."*  
Grandfather of two children

## Chapter 3: Report

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### 1) Applications Filed<sup>11</sup>

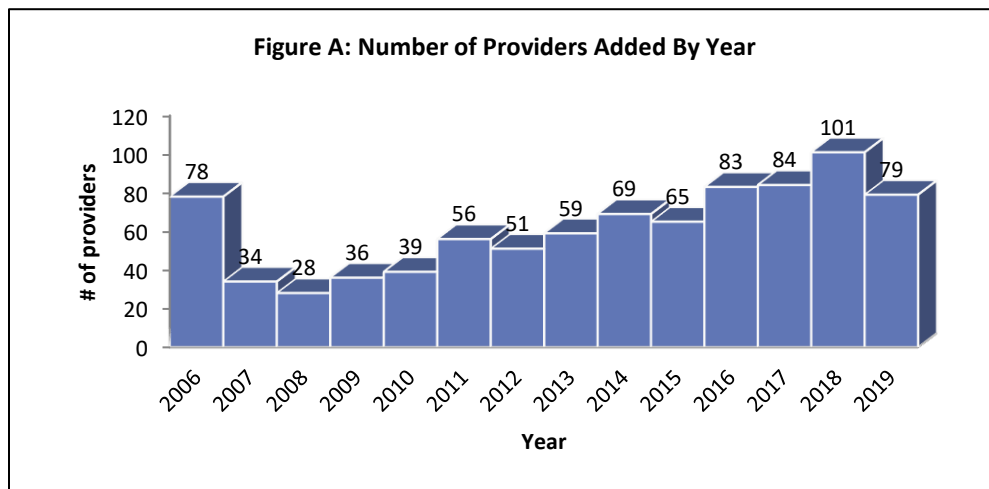
In 2019, the GCP received 119 new applications on behalf of 157 children. Of those, 10 were existing GCP participants applying to add 14 children to their subsidies, totaling 171 children in 2019.

### 2) Subsidies Awarded

Of the 119 new applications in 2019 (one application equals one family), CFSA approved 79<sup>12</sup>, resulting in 98 new children. In addition, 14 children were added to existing subsidies, totaling 112 new children enrolled in GCP in 2019.

A full subsidy payment (without offsets<sup>13</sup>) is \$24.79 per day for children younger than age 12 and \$27.92 per day for children older than 12. During 2019, 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.<sup>14</sup> 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 79 new providers/caregivers began receiving the GCP subsidy in 2019. 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.



<sup>11</sup> Potential applicants can receive an application by calling the program directly or downloading the application from the CFSA website ([www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov)). CFSA has also provided application information to community partners so they can inform prospective caregivers about the program. Applications filed are not the equivalent to a completed and/or approved application.

<sup>12</sup> Number approved were based on available funding. Additional applicants were deemed eligible.

<sup>13</sup>Caregivers not receiving other government subsidies for the child such as TANF and SSI benefits.

<sup>14</sup>The rate has remained the same since 2012.

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

Of the 905 children receiving a GCP subsidy in 2019, 705 (75%) also received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This percentage is an increase of one percent from the previous year. In addition, 51 children (6%) received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is consistent with 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 five applications ineligible in 2019. 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.

### **5) Denials Due to Lack of Appropriated Funding**

CFSA could not approve 54 applications although they were deemed eligible due to lack of funding. Those applicants have been placed on a waitlist.

### **5a) Subsidies Transferred to a Relative Caregiver**

In 2019, CFSA transferred two subsidies due to the death of a caregiver.

A subsidy can be transferred when 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 2019, 3,000 District children younger than age 18 were living in grandparent-led households and an additional 10,000 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.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "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

## 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 466 (89%).

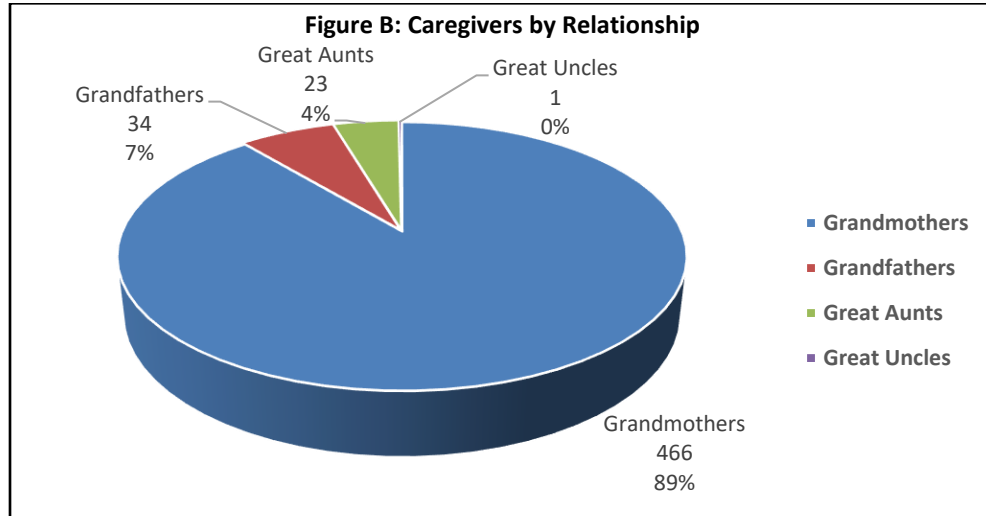


Figure C shows that currently, Wards 7 and 8 represent the largest percentage of families participating in the Grandparent Caregivers Program. Ward 7 is home to 176 families (34%) while Ward 8 has 213 families (41%). The total number of caregivers across all Wards is 524.

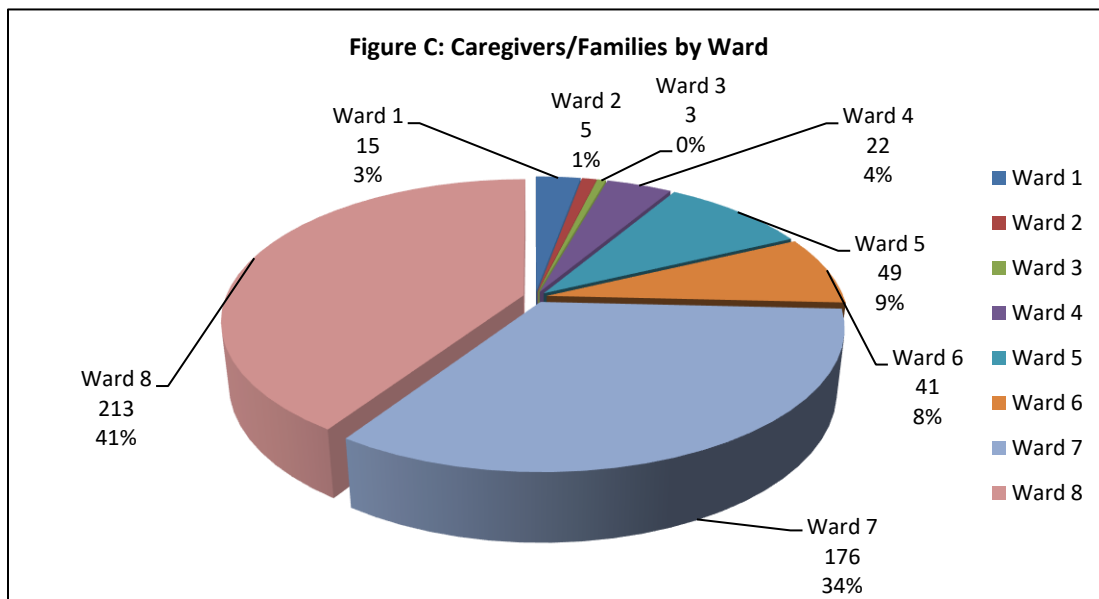
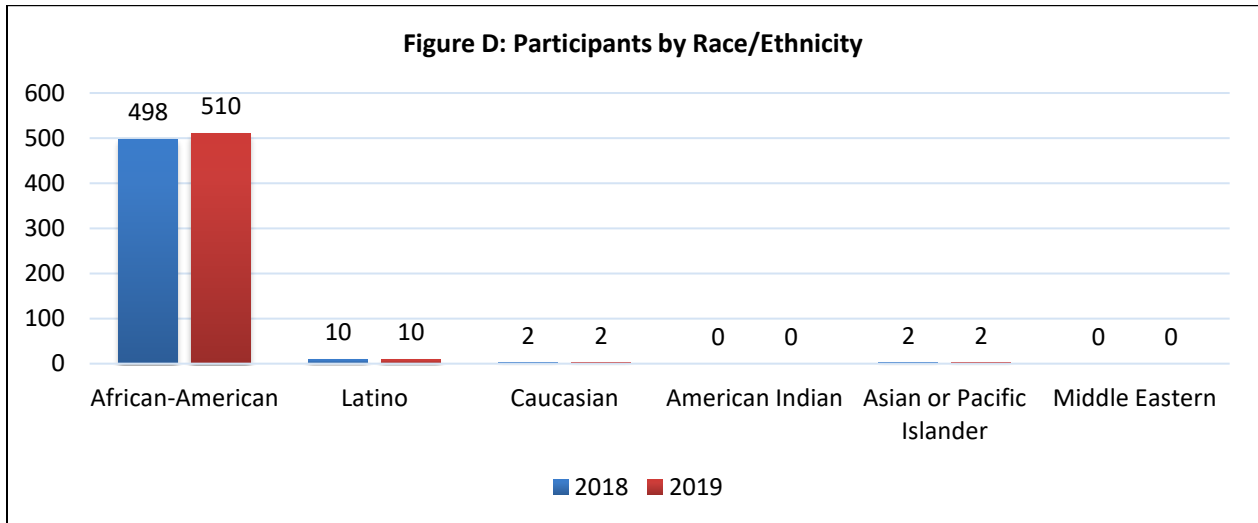
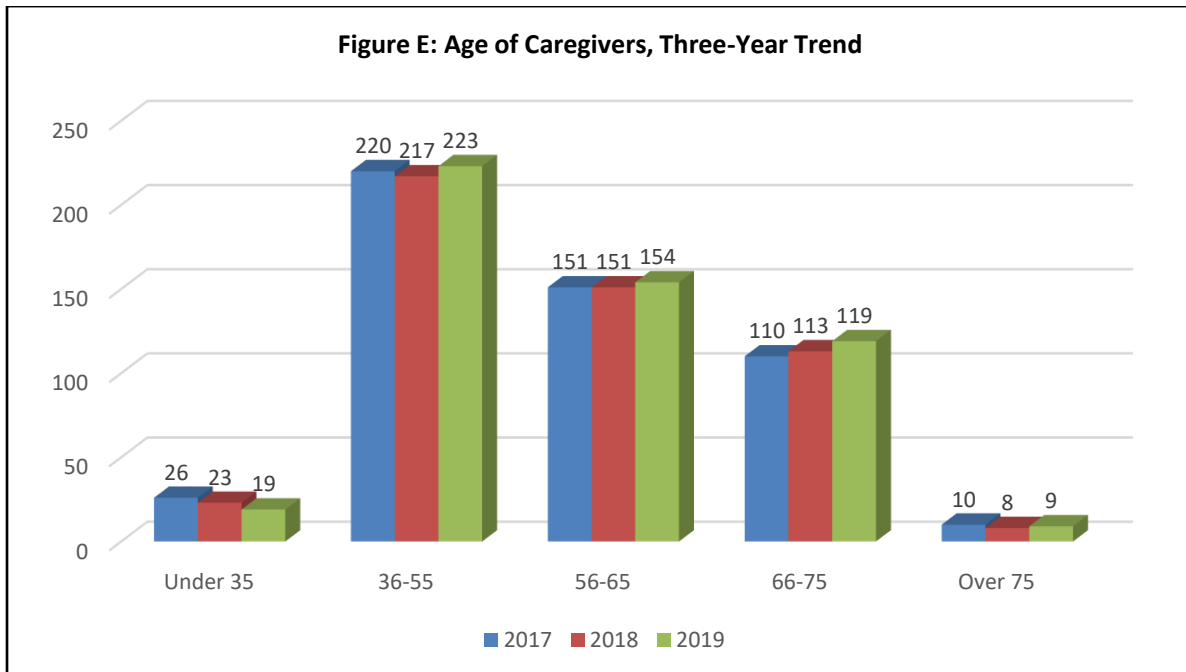


Figure D shows the majority of households in the Grandparent Caregivers Program are African-American families with a much smaller percentage of Latino and Caucasian families. The number of Latino and Caucasian families remained consistent with 2018.



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 2019 was 49. This was consistent with the median age range for 2018. This could be attributed to the steady rate of caregivers between ages 36-55 in 2019.





## **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 impacting other children in the household. Of the 82 children who exited the program during 2019, 50 exited due to reaching age 18. CFSA discontinued subsidies to the remaining 32 children for one of the following reasons:

- Death of caregiver.<sup>16</sup>
- Another person assumed care and did not reside in the District.
- Caregiver failed to recertify.
- 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 2019, no Fair Hearing appeal requests were submitted due to termination of a subsidy.

## **8) Substantiated Instances of Fraud**

In 2019, there were no instances of fraud.

## **9) Children Removed from Households while Receiving Subsidy**

In 2019, there were no children removed while receiving subsidy.

## **10) Recommendations for Program Improvement**

In 2019, CFSA launched their Kinship Navigator Program<sup>17</sup> and that program established the Kinship Programming Advisory Committee (KinPAC). KinPAC is a cross-system team which includes GCP caregivers. It is anticipated that KinPAC will serve to inform CFSA of the needs of grand-families and the community so the Kinship Navigator Program can assist in meeting those needs.

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<sup>16</sup>The death of the caregiver resulted in two children relocating out of the District to live with relatives.

<sup>17</sup> Kinship Navigator Program is a federally funded program with the intention of improving community and caregiver capacity to keep children safe and well in the homes of their 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	2019 Totals
New Applications	12	7	8	5	9	11	9	12	15	8	13	10	119
New Applications (# of Children)	17	10	12	7	18	17	14	18	19	10	16	13	171
# of Approved Applications	8	1	5	7	10	9	11	11	0	0	9	8	79
# of Children Approved	15	1	7	10	16	12	14	13	0	0	14	10	112
# of Denied Applications	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
# of Terminations	4	2	2	1	5	3	3	6	6	0	0	0	32
# of Age-outs	2	4	5	8	2	4	3	6	4	5	3	4	50
# of Appeals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# Waitlisted Due To Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	64
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	513	519	517	511	514	518	509	513	512	519	525	524	516 <sup>18</sup>
# of Children Receiving Subsidy	798	811	806	794	800	808	793	800	799	817	828	823	806 <sup>19</sup>
Total Subsidy Amount Paid	\$488,115.27	\$489,952.90	\$443,730.98	\$490,061.85	\$471,654.35	\$498,748.79	\$496,457.11	\$500,343.87	\$496,351.96	\$506,524.71	\$491,722.80	\$510,038.47	\$5,883,703.06

The Grandparent Caregivers 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 number of children and caregivers demonstrate this program is a safeguarding tool that prevents entry into the child welfare system by building family and community resiliency.

<sup>18</sup> Numbers based on a 12-month average.

<sup>19</sup> Numbers based on a 12-month average.