



Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program: Annual Status Report, CY08

January 30, 2009



D.C. Child and Family Services Agency
400 6th Street SW • Washington DC 20024 • 202-442-6000 • www.cfsa.dc.gov

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
2008 Snapshot	1
1. Statistical Overview	2
Applications	2
Subsidies	2
Waiting List (No Denials Due to Funding)	3
Estimated Eligible Caretakers	3
GCPP Participants Receiving TANF	3
Denials Due to Ineligibility	3
Terminations	4
Children Removed From Households While Receiving Subsidy.....	4
2. Program Changes and Achievements	5
Annual Rate Adjustment	5
Program Survey	5
Adjustment to Administrative Budget	6
Community Outreach	6
Coordination with Community Groups	6
3. Recommendations for Program Improvement	7
Ensure Perpetuity of Program	7
End of Life Planning	7
<u>Appendix</u>	
Program Survey Results	8



Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program

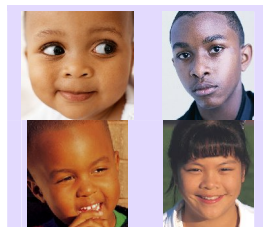
2008 SNAPSHOT



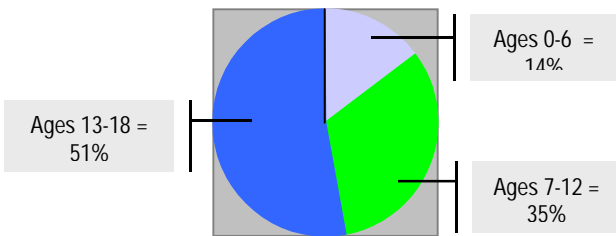
District funding of \$4.5 million served 586 total children, with a point-in-time capacity of 495.



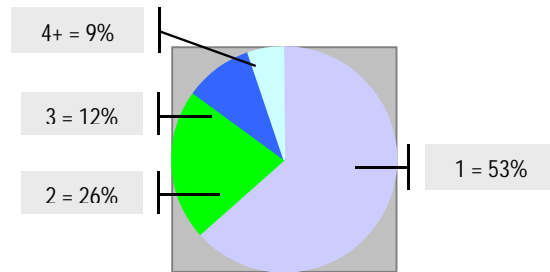
Average subsidy:
\$710.70
per month
per child



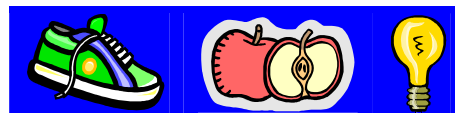
- Began year with waiting list of 67 applicants.
- Ended year with waiting list of 115 families applying on behalf of 171 children



Ages of children served
(Last day of 2008, n=508)




Number of children in households served
(Last day of 2008, n=321)



A survey showed participants are happy with the program and use the subsidy for necessities.

1. Statistical Overview

This is the third annual report about the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program (GCPP), which the District established under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005. The Act requires an annual report that includes a specific set of statistics (Table 1) and recommendations for program improvement (Section 3). The District launched the program in March 2006, with the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) serving as program administrator.

Table 1: GCPP Statistics			
	CY 2006 (Mar.-Dec.)	CY 2007 (Jan.-Dec.)	CY 2008 (Jan.-Dec.)
Program funding (subsidy portion)	\$4.3 million	\$4.3 million	\$4.3 million
Applications received (from families)	345	146	113
Subsidies awarded (to children)	423	140	82
Families receiving both GCPP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	304	359	381
Denials due to ineligibility	72	6	8
Denials due to funding (applications on the waiting list)	0	62	115
Estimated eligible caretakers who have not yet applied	See discussion, page 4		
Subsidies terminated by program or caregiver	13	70	77
Substantiated instances of fraud	0	0	0
Children removed from household while receiving subsidy	0	1	3

Applications

Program applications can be obtained by prospective applicants in several ways. Many call the program office for a copy to be mailed, while others appear personally to pick one up. The application is also available on the CFSA website (www.cfsa.dc.gov) for download and has been disseminated among the program’s many community partners. In 2008, GCPP received 101 applications from families new to the program who were applying on behalf of 155 children. Additionally, 12 existing program participants submitted applications to add 13 children who came into their care or otherwise became eligible after the family began receiving a subsidy.

Subsidies

Caregivers signed subsidy agreements every month in 2008, based on availability. We approved 82 new subsidies, counted per child, in 2008. Table 2 shows the number of subsidies approved

**Table 2:
New Children Enrolled by Month, 2008**

Jan.	10	Apr.	9	July	17	Oct.	6
Feb.	3	May	7	Aug.	8	Nov.	2
Mar.	5	June	7	Sept.	4	Dec.	4

each month. This year marked our first full calendar year operating with a waiting list. Therefore, the GCPP maintained its capacity of approximately 497 children at all times. Overall, 586 children, residing with 358 families, received subsidies for all or part of 2008.

Once approved, a caregiver can expect to receive an average daily rate of \$23.69—or \$710.70 for a 30-day month per child. The average annual subsidy amount per child is \$8,646.85.

Waiting List (No Denials Due to Funding)

When the program reached capacity in August 2007, we established a waiting list. Thus, we did not deny any applications due to funding but rather added applicants to the program from the waiting list as departing participants created vacancies. As of December 31, 2008, 115 families caring for 171 children were approved and on the waiting list until vacancies become available.

We place new applicants on the waiting list upon receipt of their complete application (not including return of Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and Child Protection Registry clearances). Because we often receive several applications a day, we note the date and time of receipt on each new application to establish a queue.

Estimated Eligible Caretakers



GCPP continues to rely on 2005 census data, which is the latest available, showing that 5,764 District children live in grandparent-led households. However, we have no way of estimating how many of those households are below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level, as required for GCPP eligibility.

In addition, almost 20,000 District children (17%) live in *relative-led* households. This information from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey shows a growing trend that reflects the important role grandparent and kinship caregivers play in the lives of children in our city. Applications to our program reveal that the average number of children per family participating in the program is less than two, specifically 1.6, and the average age of the children currently in the program is 11 years.

GCPP Participants Receiving TANF

Of the 505 children participating in the program at the end of 2008, a total of 381 (75%) also received TANF. An additional 56 children received Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Per the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005, we offset GCPP subsidy amounts for these two groups of children by the amount they receive in TANF or SSI. Many children receive Social Security death benefits from a deceased parent. These children receive a full GCPP subsidy.

Denials Due to Ineligibility

In 2008, denials due to ineligibility held steady with our previous year with a total of eight. In 2008, we denied three applicants because (1) an adult parent lived in the home, (2) the household was over income and (3) the application was not completed in the time required. When an applicant submits an incomplete application, we send a letter listing what is missing and stating that the applicant has 30 days to provide supplemental information or risk denial. GCPP staff generally follows up with a courtesy call as well.

Two applicants who were on the waiting list were also denied before their subsidies were approved. In the first case, the caregiver passed away and, in the other, the children were removed from the caregiver by Child Protective Services. In the latter, the family was already subject to a neglect case in DC Superior Court where the children were placed with their

grandparents in a Third Party Placement. A decision was made in the case to remove the children from their grandparents' care and they were no longer eligible for the GCPP.

We continue to ensure that each applicant and adult household member completes our clearance process. This includes FBI fingerprint checks, Metropolitan Police Department records and Child Protection Registry screenings. Although we have asked some applicants to provide further information to confirm that a child is not at risk, no application has been denied based on the results of this process. Additionally, no applicant who has been denied by the GCPP has ever requested a Fair Hearing to litigate the denial.

Terminations

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 family.

Of the 77 children who left the program during FY08, a total of 44 became ineligible upon reaching age 18. This was the primary reason for terminating participants. Other reasons included:

- Death of caregiver (thirteen children in six families).
- Another person assumed care of the children (eight children in seven families).
- Caregivers failed to recertify (six instances).
- Child removed by CPS (three children in two families).
- Child placed at Oak Hill for an extended and indeterminate period (two children).
- The caregiver's income increased, exceeding eligibility requirements (one child).

In 2008, no participant elected to challenge a termination decision via a Fair Hearing.

Children Removed from Household While Receiving the Subsidy

In 2008, three children were removed from two grandparents by Child Protective Services while receiving the subsidy. In the first case, the children were removed for lack of supervision. In the second, the child was removed because of the deplorable conditions of the home. Both removals resulted in court neglect cases and CFSA has put numerous services into the homes to assist with reunification. Even with these unfortunate situations, the removal rate for GCPP participants is less than half a percent.

2. Program Changes and Achievements

Annual Rate Adjustment

The Safe and Stable Home Act of 2007 made several changes to the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program. One such change was to the mandate that GCPP rates must mirror CFSA's permanent guardianship rates. Now, GCPP rates shall remain within 5% of CFSA's permanent guardianship rates. This flexibility was crucial this year in allowing the program to provide its clients with a modest subsidy increase without unduly sacrificing program capacity.



Program Survey Provides In-Depth Insight



GCPP is committed to providing an efficient, user-friendly program that achieves its directive and truly helps the families it serves. In 2007, GCPP used a brief, nine-question survey tool to assess the participants' feelings toward and value of the program. The success of that survey prompted GCPP to attempt a larger scale and more in-depth survey this year. In May 2008, we mailed a twenty-six question survey seeking qualitative and quantitative information from the respondents. The survey was conducted by Johns Hopkins University and was sent to all 310 households participating in the program at the time. It was anonymous and, to increase participant comfort and response, did not request any demographic information. In response, 190 families participated in the survey (a 61% response rate).

In the realm of household demographics, the study revealed that approximately three-quarters of program caregivers are over age 55 and approximately three-quarters also have a high-school education or less. A significant majority of participants (66%) reside in Wards 7 and 8. Eighty-eight percent of caregivers have at least two alternative sources of income while 45% have only one.

According to the survey, half of the GCPP caregivers do not know whether they would be able to continue caring for the children without the assistance of the program; 19% say they would not. Fewer than half of all children in the program have contact with a birth parent more than once or twice a year, if at all. Some have contact more frequently; however, there are some circumstances under which a birth parent may actually live in the caregiver's home with the children. These are when the parent is a minor and either enrolled in school or disabled such that they are unable to care for the children. Over half of the children have a local known parent and a quarter of the children have significant contact with a parent – weekly or more.

The survey revealed a need for assistance with end of life planning amongst GCPP participants. Only 17% of caregivers indicated that they have a written succession plan. The rest either have no plan at all or have only orally communicated it.

In addition to learning more about the GCPP families and how they use the subsidy, the survey also sought to identify other supports and services that the caregivers need. Approximately 30% of caregivers indicated that the cost of housing remains a challenge; this was also reported as a

major challenge in last year's survey. Caregivers also reported support groups as the second most unmet need (17%).

In assessing caregivers' views of the program administration, it was established that the vast majority (81%) did not feel the application process was confusing. Although many caregivers follow-up with questions following their enrollment, few call more than every six months. Social networks remain the primary means of communication among caregivers; 35% learned of the program from family and friends. The Appendix provides additional survey details.

Adjustment to Administrative Budget

GCPP believes strongly in its mission. To that end, the program has adjusted its annual administrative budget from \$200,000 to \$184,500. By working efficiently, we have moved an additional \$15,500 to our subsidy budget for distribution to families in need and spend about 4% of the total budget on administrative needs.

Community Outreach

The GCPP continues to focus on community outreach to ensure all eligible District residents are aware of the program. In 2008, GCPP staff participated in Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative networking meetings and D.C. ElderFest. We distributed program materials throughout the D.C. Government for cross-promotion with other programs and presented information at two local school events. Finally, the program manager appeared on NBC-4's Viewpoint, a weekly public affairs show which dedicated an entire episode to GCPP.

Coordination with Community Groups

GCPP continues its strong ties with community advocates and stakeholders. We maintain valuable working relationships with organizations such as AARP, Bread for the City, Children's Law Center, Family Ties, Generations United, Legal Aid Society, and the legal clinics at Catholic University and University of the District of Columbia law schools.

3. Recommendations for Program Improvement

The following recommendations intend to enhance the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program (GCPP) for each of our participants.

Ensure the Perpetuity of the Program

The Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program will expire at the end of this fiscal year, September 30, 2009. CFSA supports the program becoming a permanent program and will submit proposed legislation to that end. As this Annual Report, and those that have preceded it, have shown, GCPP is a solid program which provides much need support to grandparent caregivers.

End of Life Planning

The GCPP 2008 survey revealed that our participants do not have solid end of life plans. In 2008, six of our participants passed away, leaving 13 children without a caregiver. The children of one family ended up in the care of CFSA when no relative was available. In other cases, there was confusion and unnecessary delays in establishing plans for the children. These children have already lost the care of their parents and should be subject to as little turmoil as possible if they lose their surrogate. Therefore, GCPP and its community partners will be instituting programs to assist participants with end of life planning that includes the identification of alternative caregivers.

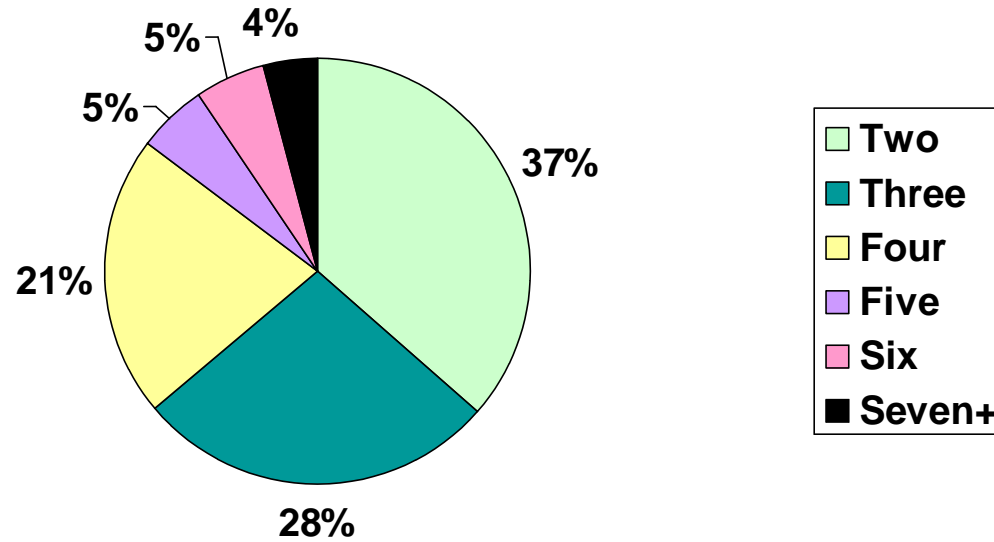
APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS



Appendix

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: Household Sizes



Size of GCPP Households:

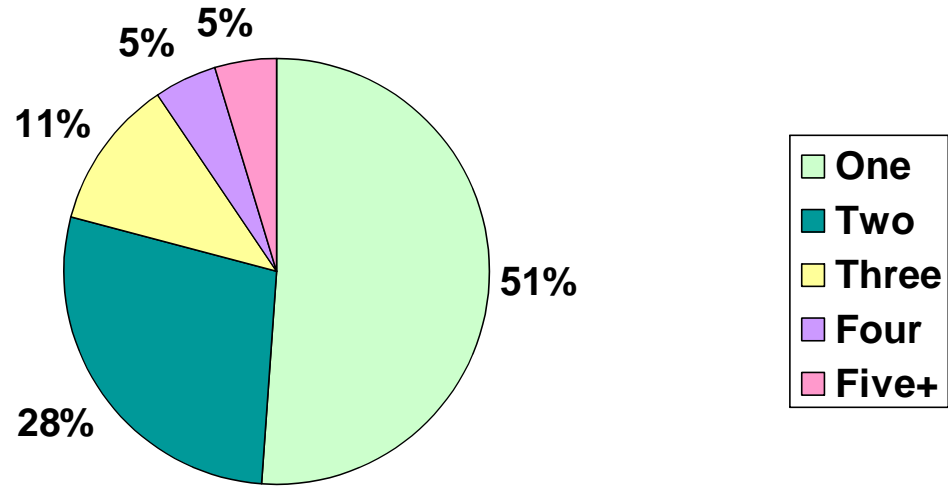
Average = 3.3

Mode = 2

Median = 3

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: Number of Children in each GCPP Household



Number of Minors in GCPP Households:

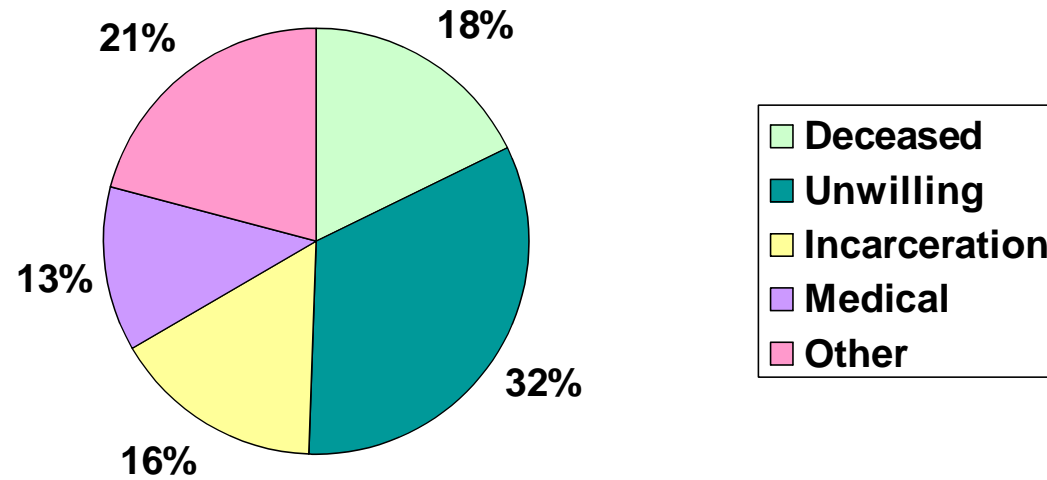
Average = 1.8

Mode = 1

Median = 1

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

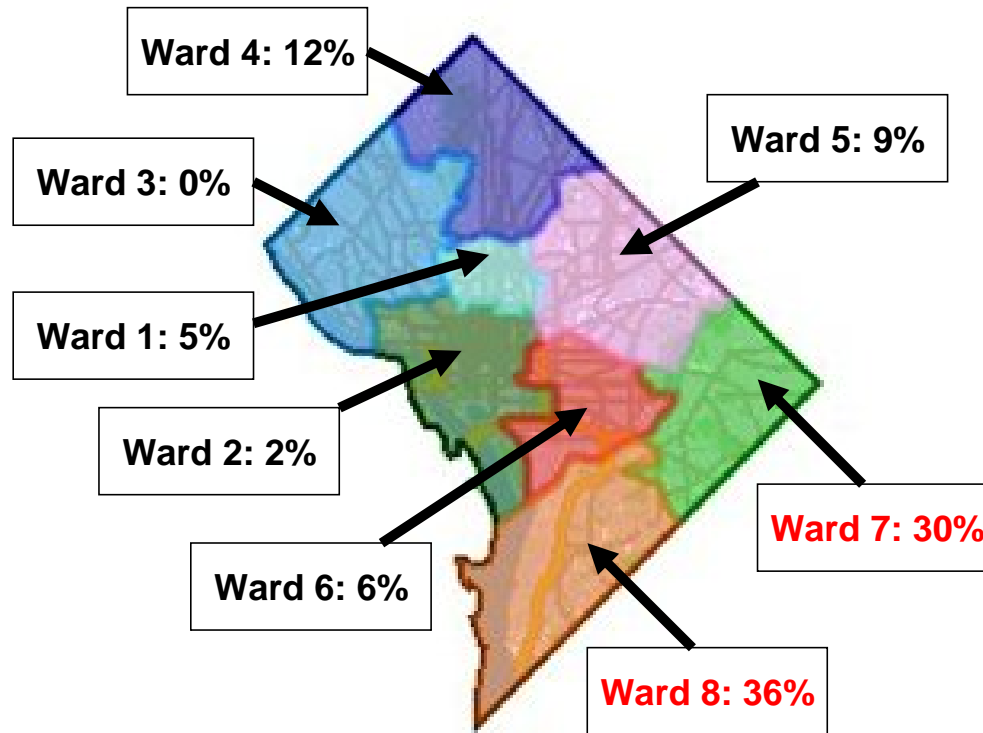
Survey Results: Reasons for Absence of Parent(s)



Contact with Birth Parent:
Space was provided for write-in responses for those who selected "Other." Drug or drug-related circumstances (rehabilitation) account for 13% of parental absences based on write-in responses.

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

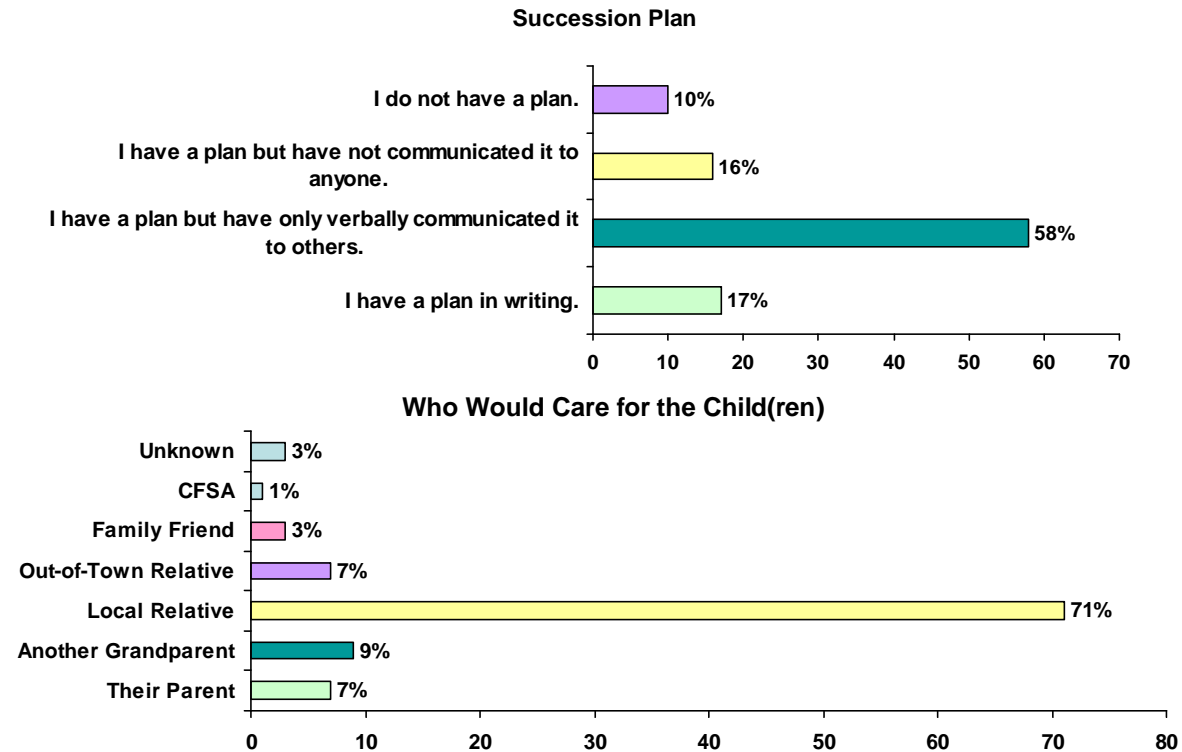
Survey Results: GCPP Caregivers by Ward



*Distribution of GCPP Caregivers by Ward:
Wards 8 and 7 have the highest concentrations of caregivers, whereas Ward 3 has none.*

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

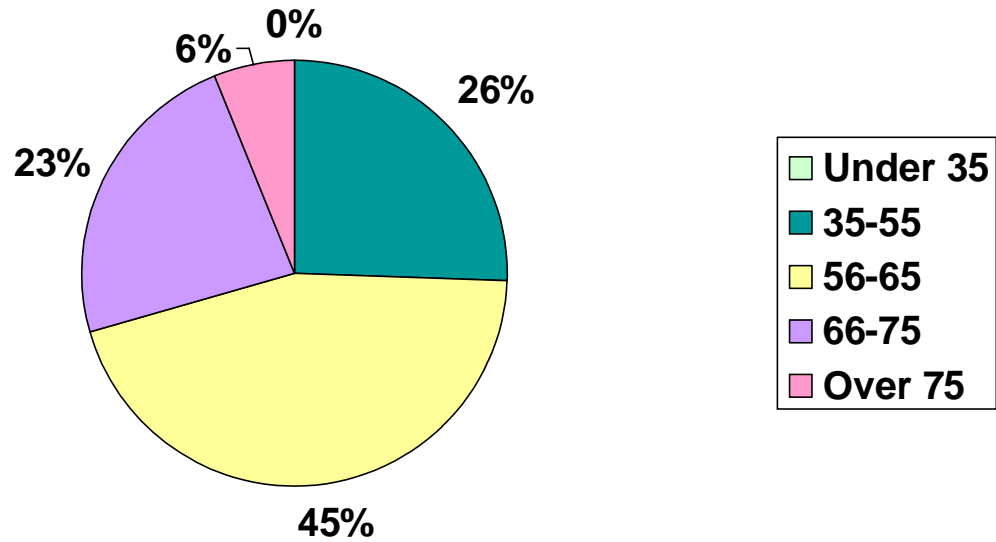
Survey Results: Succession Planning and Continuity of Care



Succession Planning and Continuity of Care:
A relatively small percentage of caregivers have a plan in writing to facilitate transfer of care (17%). Local relatives make up the vast majority of successors, but parents make up a very small number.

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: Caregiver Age

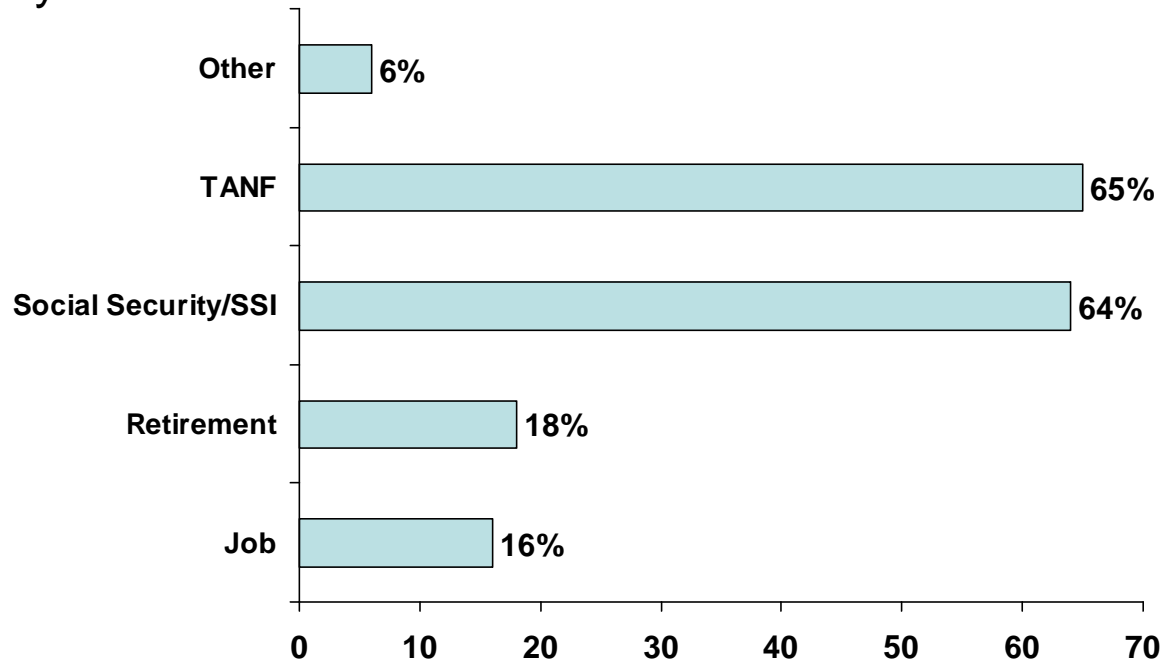


Caregiver Age:

Virtually no caregivers are under the age of 35, and three-quarters were over 55. Also, there was a correlation between age and Ward. On average caregivers in Ward 8 were younger, while caregivers in Ward 7 tended to be older. There was no correlation between age and the other Wards.

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: Sources of Income

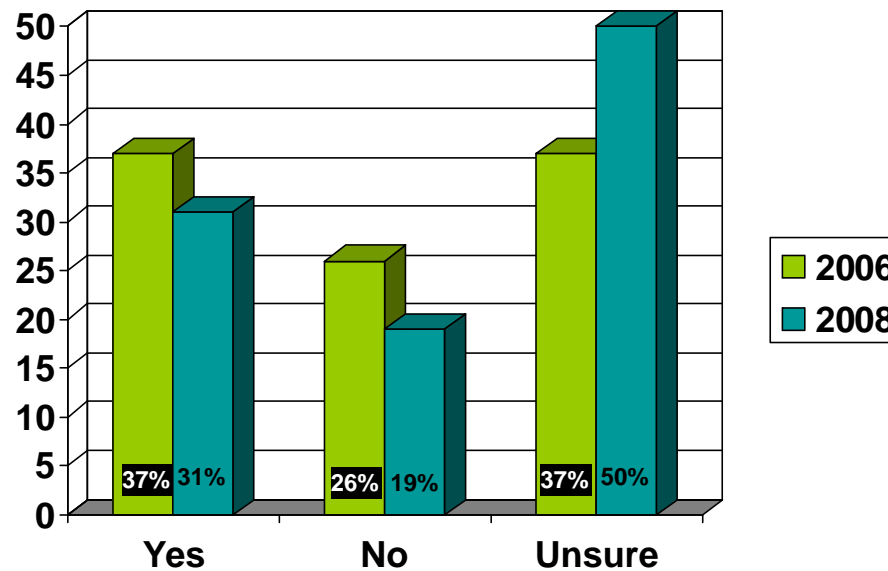


Sources of Income:

45% of caregivers have one other source of income; 43% have two other sources; and 11% have three other sources. The GCPP requires applicants to have applied for or be receiving TANF. Because of this, most caregivers receive either TANF or Social Security/SSI.

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

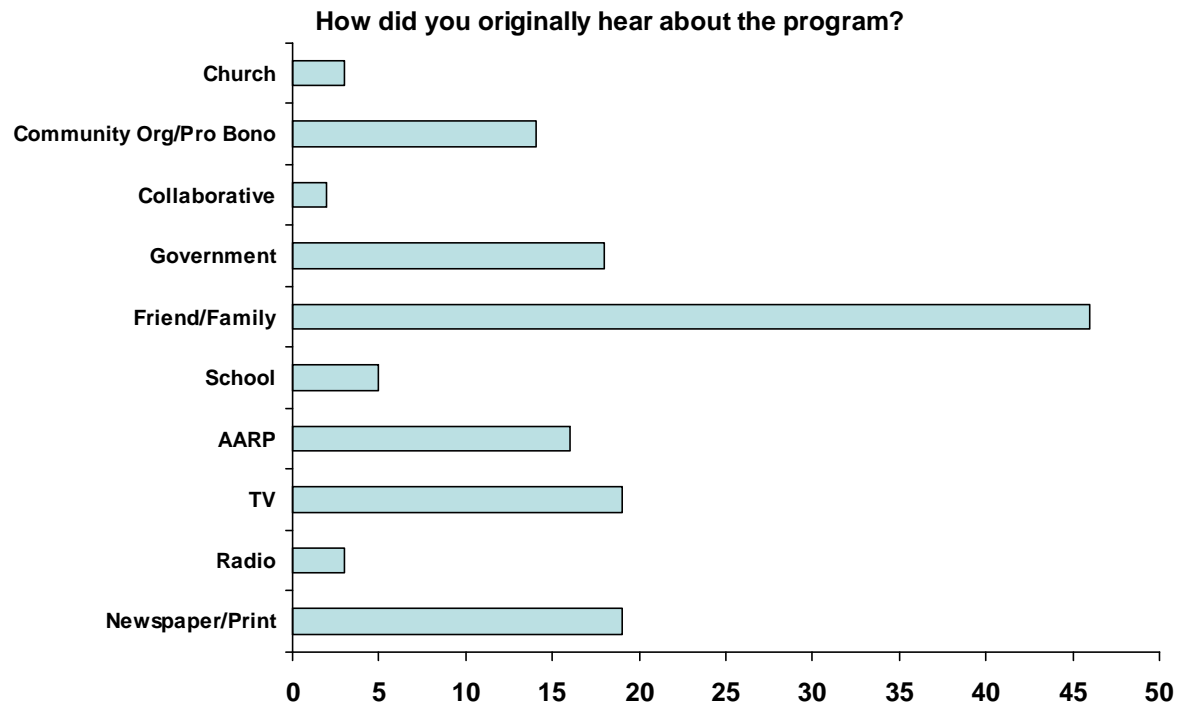
Survey Results: Probability of Care Without the Subsidy



Ability to care for the child without the subsidy:
There has been a significant increase in the amount of uncertainty among caregivers.
There is no strong correlation between the following and probability of caring for the children without the subsidy: caregiver age, Ward, education, the length of time in the program, number of children in the house, contact with parent, or number of people in the home.

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

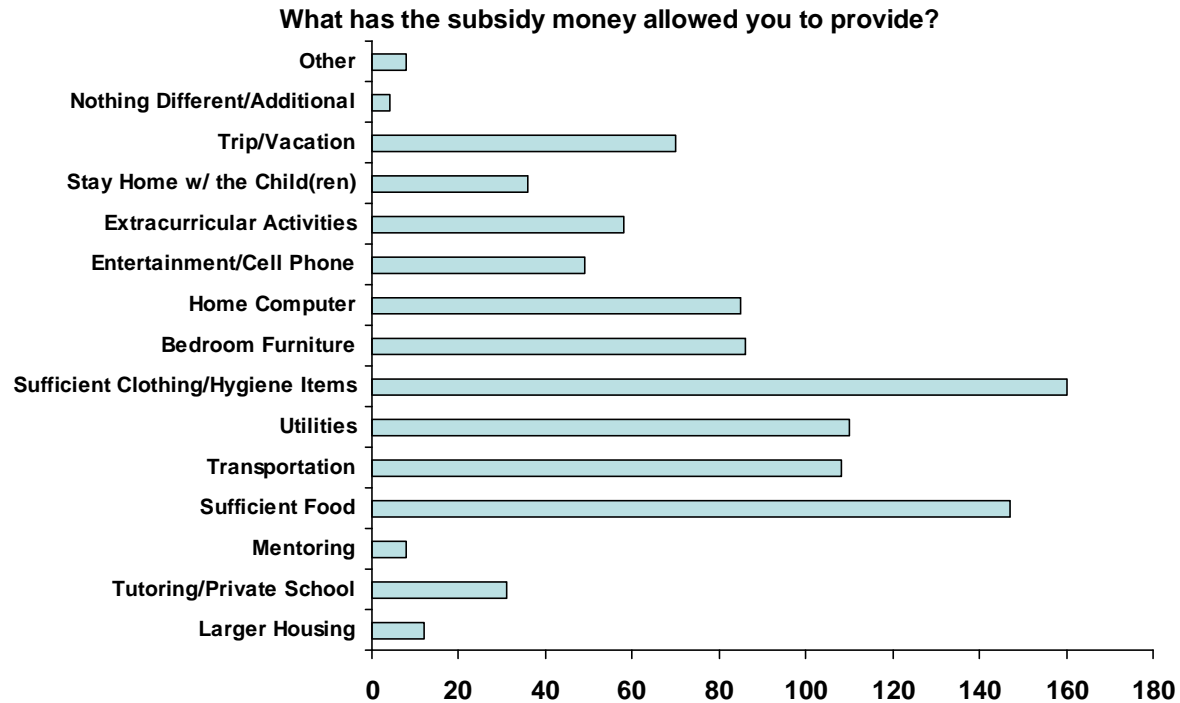
Survey Results: Learning of the Program



***Learning of the Program:
Word-of-mouth via family and friends remains the primary means of exposure for the program.***

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: Needs Addressed by GCPP

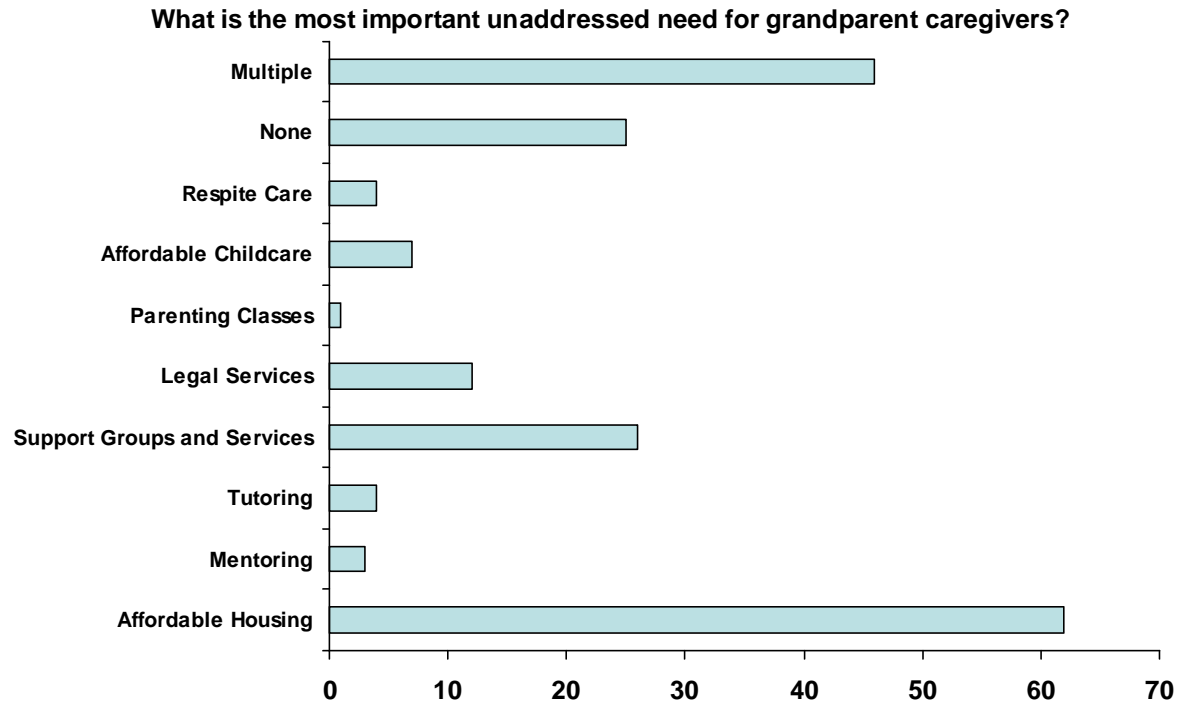


Needs Addressed:

Participants were asked to select all items the GCPP allows them to provide to the child(ren). Basic necessities such as food, clothing, and utilities are still the most common, but an increasing percentage (relative to the 2006 survey) also chose enrichment items such as computers, trips, and extracurricular activities.

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: GCPP Unmet Needs

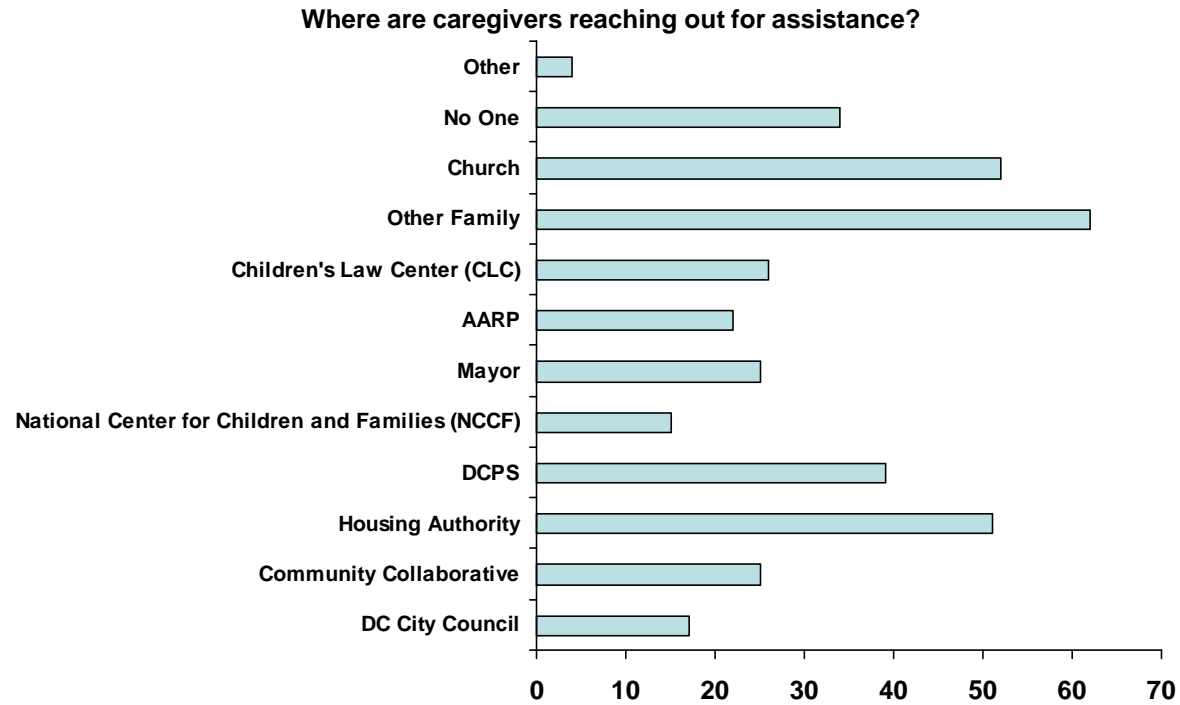


Unaddressed Needs:

Housing remains by far the largest unaddressed need. Referring to the previous slide, caregivers appear to use the subsidy primarily for basic necessities instead of improved housing. Compared to the 2006 survey, fewer caregivers have no unaddressed needs, but this percentage remains low (13%).

APPENDIX: GCPP 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Results: Sources of Assistance



Sources of Assistance:

Family networks and faith-based organizations remain important gateways as caregivers seek assistance. Given their mission, Community Collaboratives remain relatively under utilized. The Housing Authority remains a primary source of government support.