

# Division of Early Care and Education Annual Report

Calendar Year 2014



This report is available on the Internet at  
<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/rptplangrants>



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# **Calendar Year 2014 Division of Early Care and Education Annual Report: Early Childhood in Wisconsin**

## **Purpose of the DECE Annual Report**

The *Division of Early Care and Education Annual Report: Early Childhood in Wisconsin* summarizes data related to children and families supported by programs in the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families' Division of Early Care and Education (DECE). This report highlights information about the regulated child care programs serving these families and the activities throughout the Division that support program quality improvement, fraud reduction, and improved access to affordable high-quality child care.

Information highlighted in this report has been collected from bureaus and programs within the DECE including: the Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR), the Bureau of Early Learning and Policy (BELP), the Bureau of Program Integrity (BPI), and Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA). Please refer to Attachment 1 for an Organization Chart of the DECE.

## **Overview of Early Care and Education in Wisconsin**

The primary function of the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) is to supervise activities that are administered through contracts with local or county agencies while assuring the continued development and implementation of statewide policies and procedures. These programs work together to support functionality and efficient implementation of initiatives such as licensing and certification, quality improvement, fraud detection and investigation, and child care subsidy. Each program highlighted in this report contributes to the mission of the Division to provide access to affordable, high-quality child care and early education experiences, to enhance children's development, and to support families in work and parenting roles.

## **Report Interpretation and Data Limitations**

The Annual Report focuses specifically on data relating to regulated child care providers and the families and children supported by programs within the DECE. This report is produced using data collected and stored in DCF automated information systems including: Child Care Statewide Administration Web (CSAW), Cares Worker Web (CWW), Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS), and YoungStar Case Management. These automated information systems are designed for use by child care eligibility workers, authorization workers, licensing specialists, certification specialists, YoungStar technical consultants, and program integrity staff to support and connect program-wide staff activities and to supply information and documentation regarding services provided to families and children.

# 1. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program helps low-income families with the cost of child care while they are working or preparing to enter the workforce. Wisconsin Shares is administered at the local level by counties and tribes. The DCF contracts with 71 counties and nine Wisconsin tribes to administer Wisconsin Shares. DCF works with an additional two tribes for licensing and certification. In Milwaukee County, Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) provides direct services for child care authorizations, and the Department of Health Services' Milwaukee Enrollment Services determines financial and non-financial eligibility. In 2013 the Western Region for Economic Assistance, consisting of La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon, Jackson, Clark, Trempealeau, Buffalo, and Pepin counties, piloted the delivery of Wisconsin Shares through the Income Maintenance Consortium model. In 2014 the Northern Consortium, consisting of Ashland, Bayfield, Florence, Forest, Iron, Lincoln, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, and Wood counties, was created with services planned for 2015.

## 1.1. Children and Families in Wisconsin Shares 2014

To be eligible for the child care subsidy, a parent, foster parent, relative, or person acting in place of a parent must require child care to be able to participate in one of the following activities: unsubsidized work, high school (if a teen parent is under 20 years of age), Wisconsin Works (W-2) placement, approved employment skills training while employed in unsubsidized work, FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) work search or work experience activities, or be a W-2 applicant participating in job search, training, or orientation activities. During 2014:

- Wisconsin Shares served 79,002 unique children (unduplicated counts).
- Wisconsin Shares supported 45,734 families (unduplicated counts).
- During each month, an average of 46,140 children received benefits.

**Ages of Children Served by Shares in 2014**

Age Groups*	Age	Number	Percent	Total Number
00 - <02 Years	0	6,501	8.23	6,501
	1	7,828	9.91	14,329
02 - <06 Years	2	9,020	11.42	23,349
	3	9,742	12.33	33,091
	4	9,488	12.01	42,579
	5	7,990	10.11	50,569
06 - <09 Years	6	6,624	8.38	57,193
	7	6,010	7.61	63,203
	8	4,838	6.12	68,041
09 - <13 Years	9	3,967	5.02	72,008
	10	3,171	4.01	75,179
	11	2,248	2.85	77,427
	12	1,532	1.94	78,959
13 - <14 Years	13	24	0.03	78,983
14 - <15 Years	14	13	0.02	78,996
15 - <16 Years	15	4	0.01	79,000
16 - <17 Years	17	1	0	79,001
17 - <18 Years	18	1	0	79,002

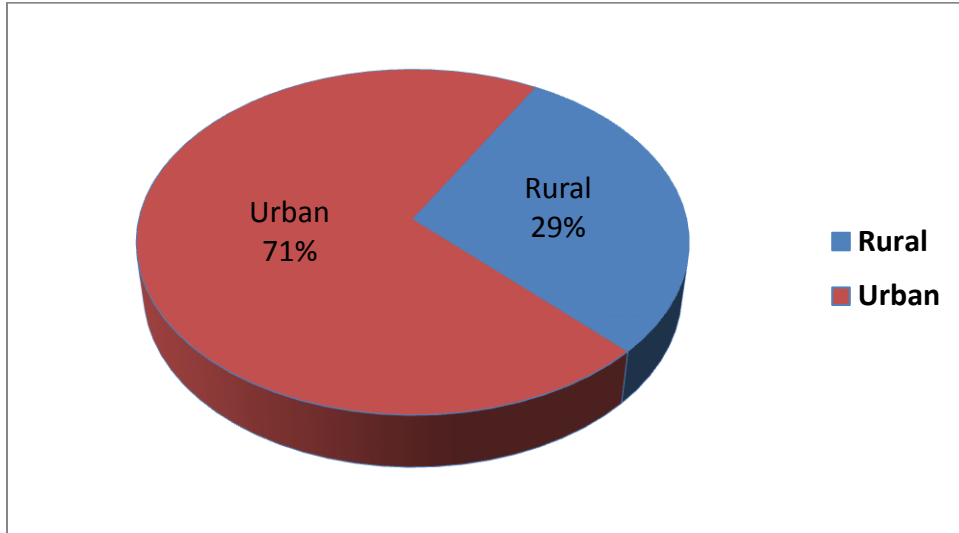
\* Color-coded groups detail how the CC Warehouse Data is combined into age "groups".

## Families Served: Rural versus Urban Areas

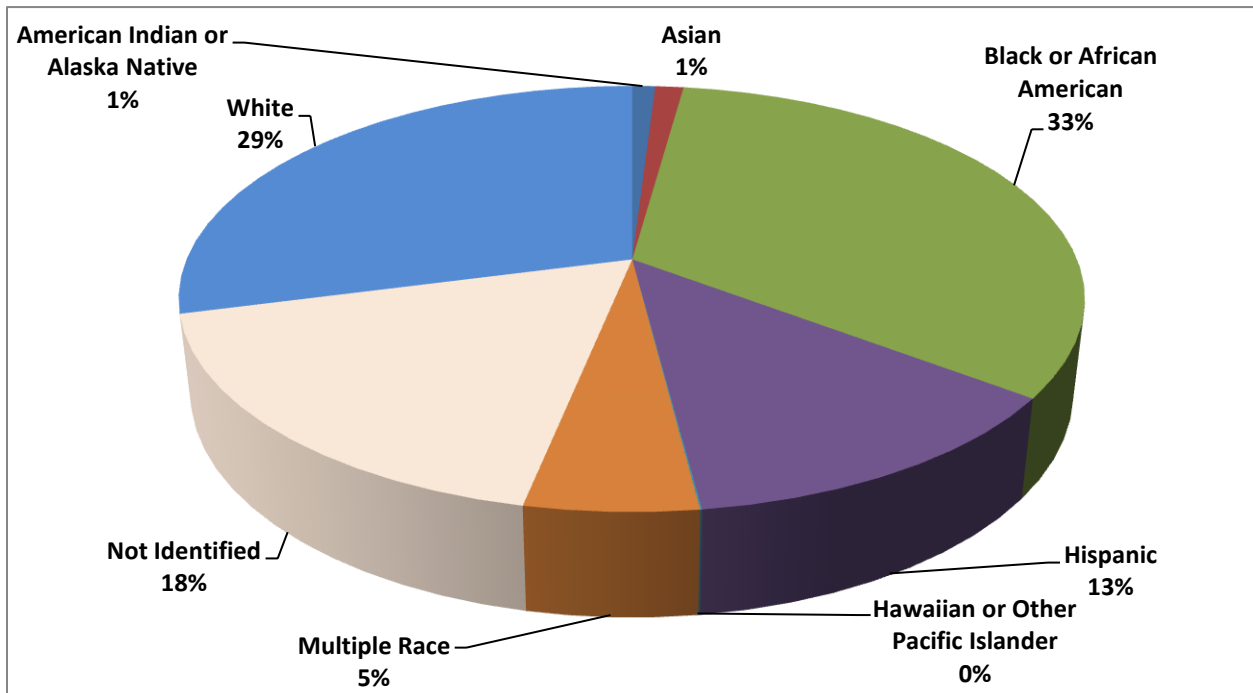
“Urban” includes: Dane, Brown, Rock, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha Counties.

In CY 2014:

- An average of 33,619 children living in urban areas benefited from child care subsidy each month.
- An average of 12,695 children living in rural areas benefited from child care subsidy each month.
- An average of 247 children from Native American Tribes benefited from child care subsidy each month.



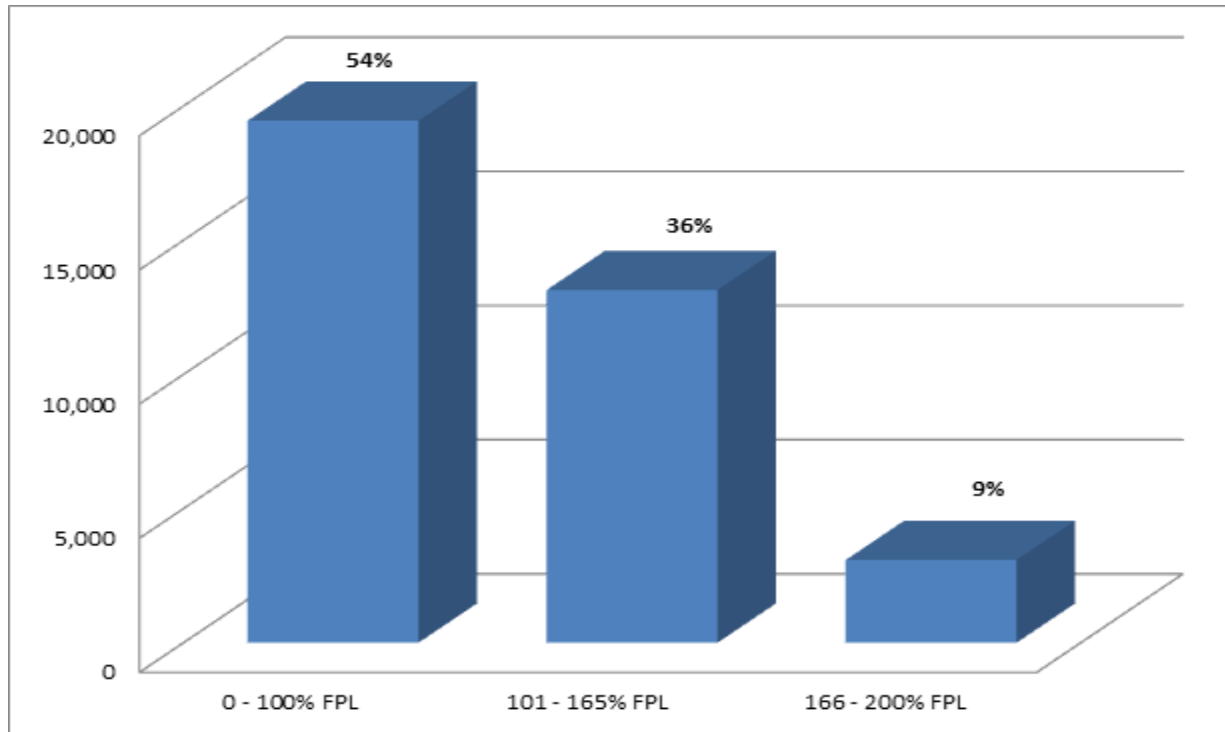
Race/Ethnicity of Children in Shares in 2014



## Served Families by Their Income as Percent of Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

To be initially eligible for Wisconsin Shares, the family's gross monthly income must be equal to or less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the corresponding family group size. Families continue to be eligible up to 200% of the FPL. Foster parents, kinship relatives who receive a kinship benefit for the child and have a court order for their placement, and subsidized guardians have different income eligibility requirements.

### Number of Families Receiving Shares by Income as a Percentage of FPL as of 12/31/14



## 1.2. Wisconsin Shares Expenditures

Wisconsin Shares reimburses child care providers for a portion of the cost of care based on the family's monthly income. Families are responsible for paying the difference between the Wisconsin Shares subsidy payment and the total cost of care.

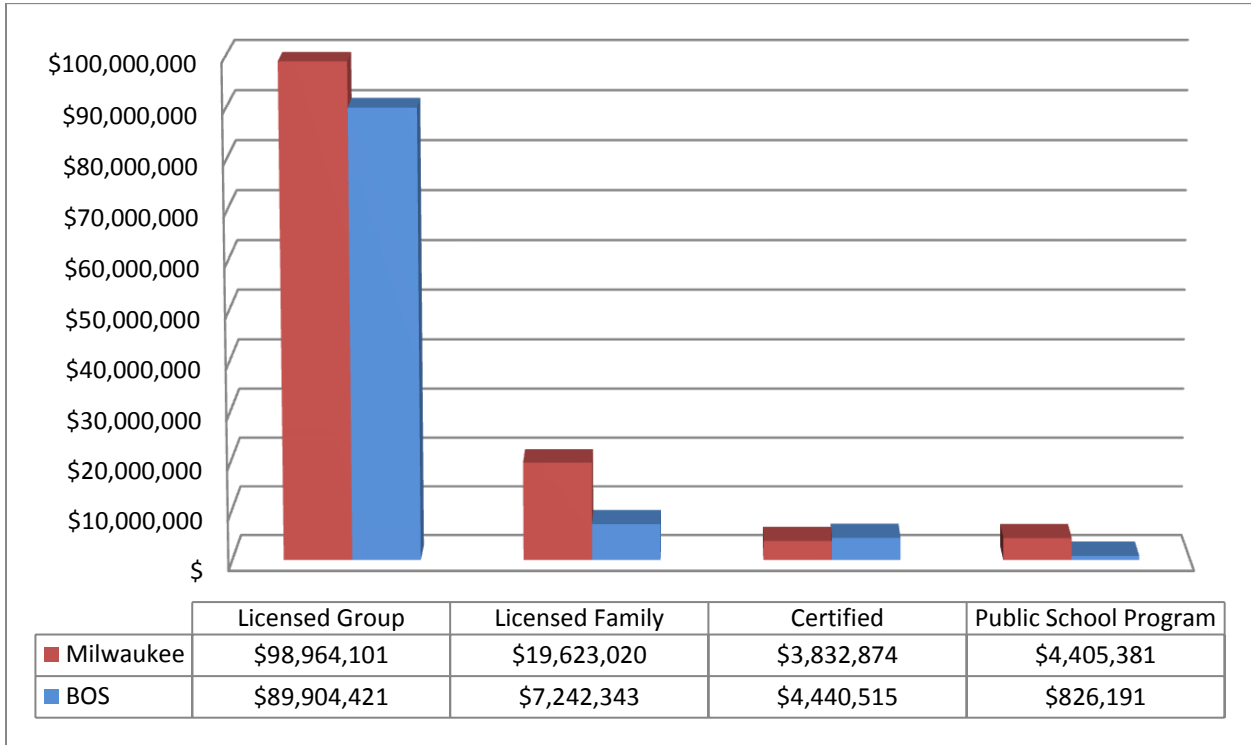
### Wisconsin Shares Expenditures by Quarter

Calendar Quarter 2014	Milwaukee County Issuances	Balance of State Issuances	Statewide Issuances
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	\$27,190,396	\$23,840,652	\$51,031,048
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	\$34,031,495	\$27,975,247	\$62,006,742
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	\$36,376,531	\$29,066,091	\$65,442,622
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	\$32,462,565	\$26,489,074	\$58,951,639
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$130,060,987</b>	<b>\$107,371,064</b>	<b>\$237,432,051</b>

## Wisconsin Shares Issuance Amount by Type of Care

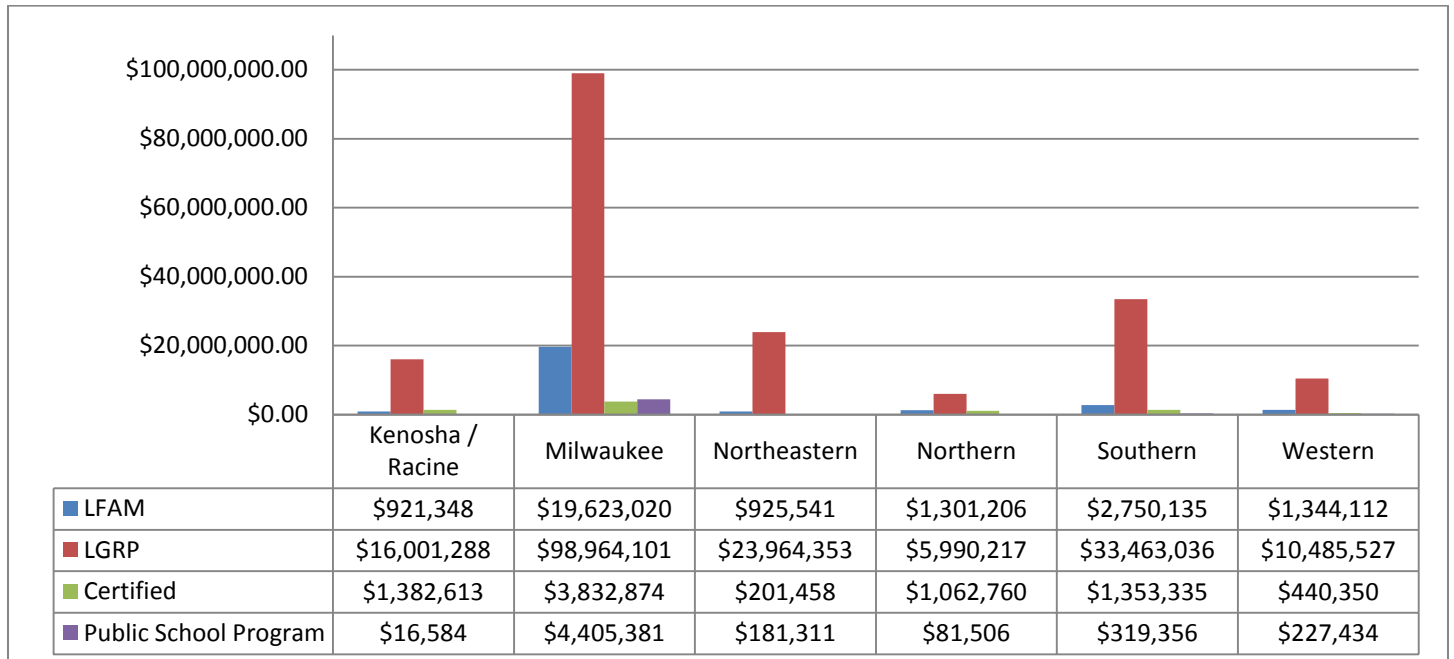
Types of regulated care that are eligible for Wisconsin Shares reimbursement include:

- Certified Care (3 or fewer children under age 7 in care)
- Licensed Family Child Care (up to 8 children under age 7)
- Licensed Group Child Care (9 or more children under age 7)
- Public School Program



## Wisconsin Shares Issuance Amount by YoungStar Region

Regions listed below are identified by YoungStar regional designations. For additional information on the counties included in the regions, please visit: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice>





## 2. YoungStar, Wisconsin’s Quality Rating and Improvement System

YoungStar, a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), was developed to improve the quality of child care for Wisconsin children. YoungStar establishes a consistent standard for measuring child care quality in Wisconsin, based on the quality components of educational qualifications, learning environment and curriculum, business practices, and health and well-being of children. Programs are evaluated and rated using a 5 Star rating scale.

YoungStar addresses several key issues in Wisconsin’s child care system. YoungStar:

1. Improves the overall quality of child care
2. Creates a clear, understandable tool for parents to choose quality child care
3. Creates incentives for providers to improve services, particularly for low-income children
4. Establishes a connection between child care quality and the rate of Wisconsin Shares payments, and helps prevent fraud in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

YoungStar offers child care providers technical assistance, grants, professional development counseling, and a variety of training opportunities to support quality improvements. YoungStar offers parents resources and the Child Care Finder application to help them identify key elements of quality in child care so they can choose the best program for their children.

Celebrate Children Foundation, Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), and Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) administer YoungStar across the state. These three organizations combined are recognized as *The YoungStar Consortium*.

Child care programs must be regulated or exempt from regulation and must participate in YoungStar to be eligible for Wisconsin Shares funds. All technical assistance and quality rating services are offered through the YoungStar Consortium and its local YoungStar offices.

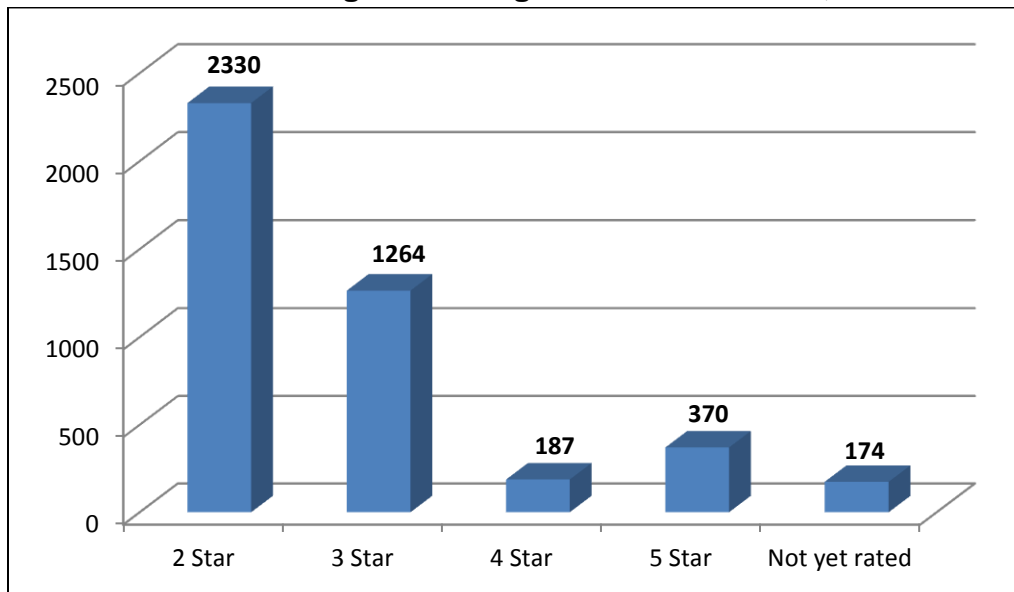
### Children Participating in Wisconsin Shares by YoungStar Level as of December 31, 2014

Region	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star	Total
Kenosha/Racine	684	2,147	80	471	<b>3,382</b>
Milwaukee	7,574	10,671	556	2,972	<b>21,773</b>
Northeastern	980	2,426	588	1,101	<b>5,095</b>
Northern	755	947	90	298	<b>2,090</b>
Southern	1,699	2,754	502	1,880	<b>6,835</b>
Western	1,034	1,335	148	336	<b>2,853</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,726</b>	<b>20,280</b>	<b>1,964</b>	<b>7,058</b>	<b>42,028</b>

**NOTE: Wisconsin Shares does not reimburse providers at the 1 Star level for caring for children.**

As of December 31, 2014, there were 5,489 regulated programs in Wisconsin of which 4,339 (80%) were rated in YoungStar.

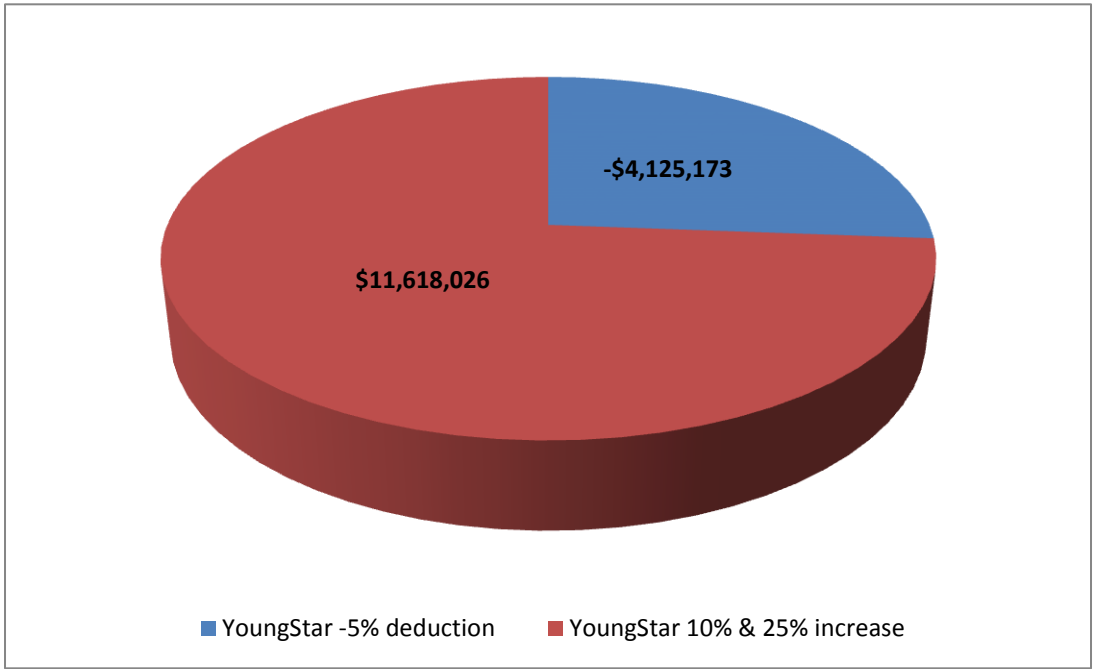
**Provider YoungStar Rating as of December 31, 2014**



**Star Rating - Quality Incentive Payments:** Wisconsin Shares reimbursement levels are based on the provider's star rating.

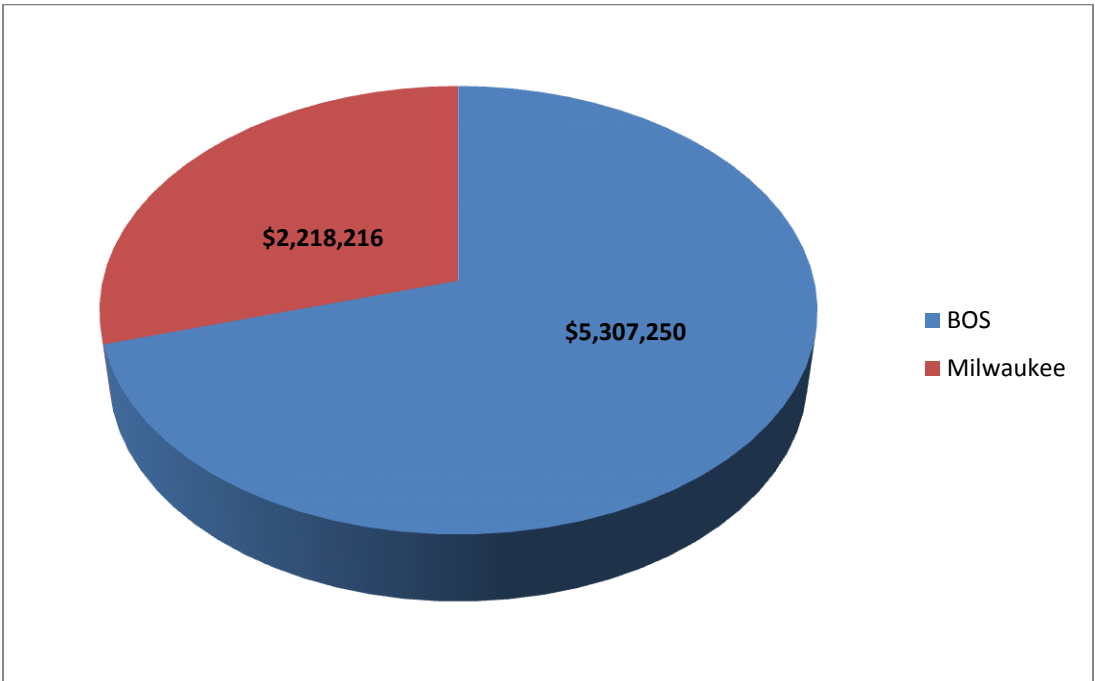
- **5 Star Provider** – Meets highest levels of quality standards. Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursement *increased by up to 25%*.
- **4 Star Provider** – Meets elevated levels of quality standards. Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursement *increased by up to 10%*.
- **3 Star Provider** – Meets proficient levels of quality standards. Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursement remains *the same*.
- **2 Star Provider** – Meets health and safety standards. Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursement *reduced by 5%*.
- **1 Star Provider** – Not eligible for Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursement. These providers' child care licenses or certifications have been revoked, denied or suspended, or their Wisconsin Shares payments have been ended due to fraud or suspected fraud.

### Total YoungStar Adjustments\*

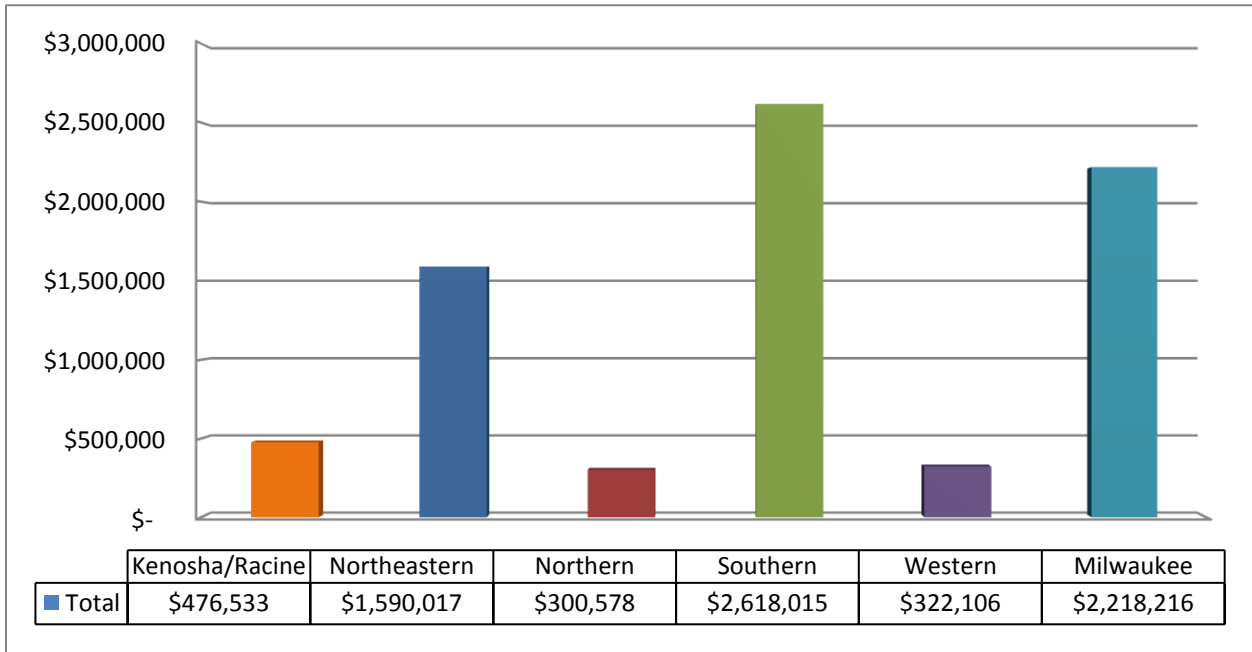


\* Due to data limitations, included in these amounts are other adjustments made by the Division of Early Care and Education. However, a vast majority of the adjustments are attributed to YoungStar.

### Total Positive YoungStar Adjustments \$7,525,465.84



## Total YoungStar Issuance Amount by Region



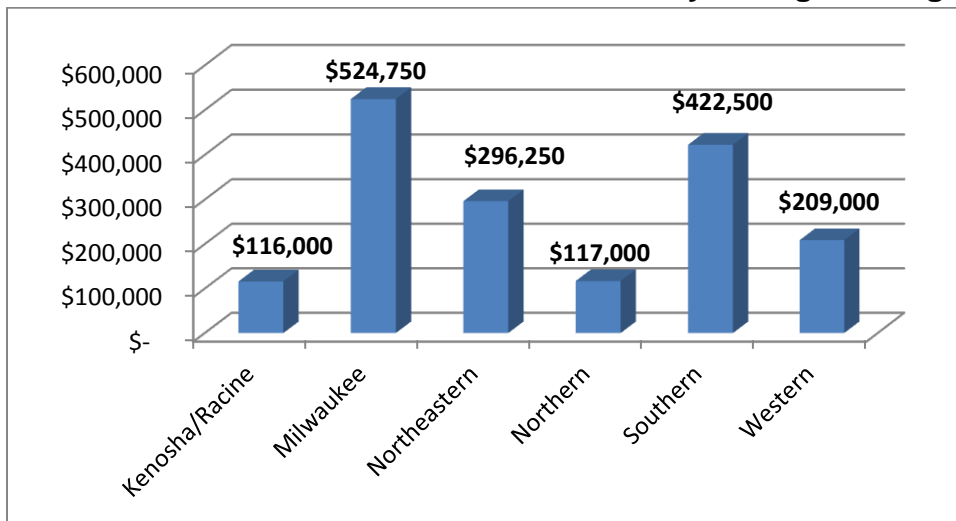
### 2.1. YoungStar Micro-Grant Program

YoungStar micro-grants are funds provided to support program quality improvement. The YoungStar Consortium administers the tracking, eligibility determination, and distribution of micro-grants to child care programs/providers. YoungStar participants must actively engage in quality improvement efforts with their YoungStar Technical Consultant or be accredited and provide required documentation to be eligible for a micro-grant. Eligible YoungStar participants are awarded a micro-grant every year in the following amounts:

- \$1,000 for a licensed Group Child Care or School-Age program
- \$500 for a licensed Family Child Care program
- \$250 for a certified Family Child Care program
- \$200 for a Day Camp program

During calendar year 2014, over \$1,685,500 in micro-grants were awarded to YoungStar participants.

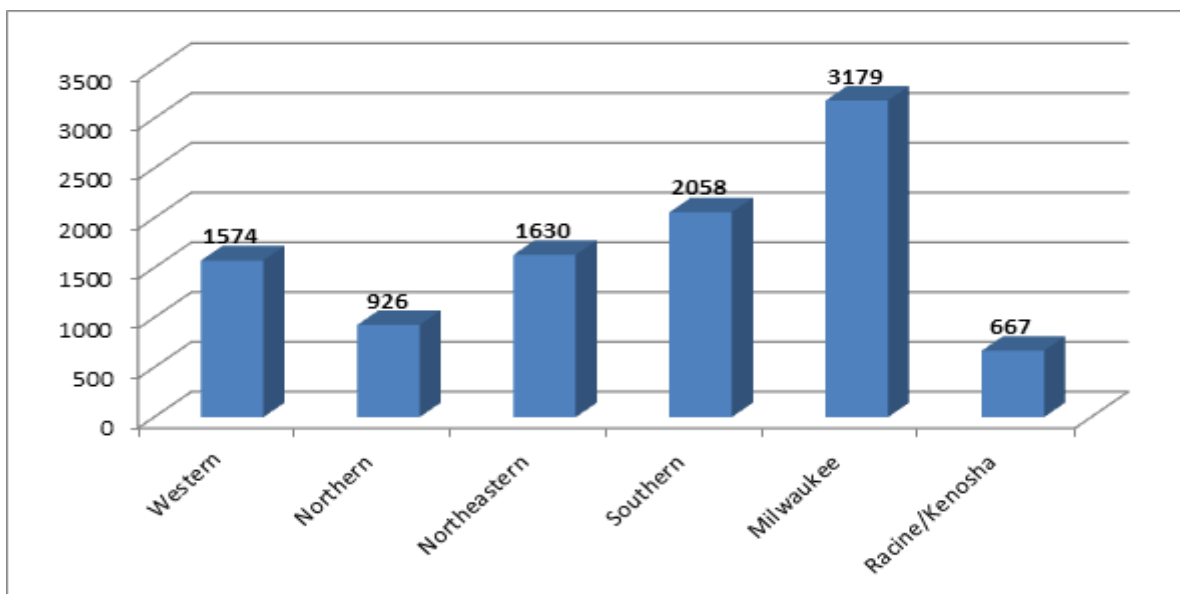
### Micro-Grants Issued to Child Care Providers by YoungStar Region



## 2.2. YoungStar Technical Assistance

YoungStar technical assistance is provided to child care programs (when requested) to work on collaborative Quality Improvement Plans and support defined steps for program enhancement. Technical consultation support is provided on-site to programs for an average of ten hours per program, per year. In 2014, YoungStar provided 2,191 Technical Assistance visits to child care programs.

**Technical Assistance Visits by YoungStar Regions**



## 2.3. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin is a statewide scholarship program designed to help teaching staff in child care centers and afterschool programs, Head Start teachers, family child care providers, and center directors and administrators advance their educational qualifications while continuing their current employment in regulated early childhood and school-age care settings. T.E.A.C.H. links education, compensation and commitment to improving the quality of early education. There are a variety of scholarship models designed to meet the diverse needs of the workforce. All models support credit-based education in Wisconsin institutions of higher education. By working in partnership with programs and scholarship recipients, T.E.A.C.H. pays the largest share of expenses related to the completion of an educational path towards a credential, degree, or coursework related to improving a YoungStar rating. T.E.A.C.H. also provides counseling and administrative support, and a contract completion bonus.

### **Scholarship Types for FY 2014 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Participants**

- 3-8 Credit Scholarship – A flexible scholarship designed for providers who may take between 3 and 8 credits over 3 semesters.
- Credential Scholarship – A two-year scholarship awarded for The Wisconsin Registry Credential programs: Child Care Administrator, Infant Toddler, Preschool, Inclusion, Leadership, Afterschool and Youth Development, Program Development, and Family Child Care.
- Associate's Degree Scholarship
- Bachelor's Degree Scholarship
- 9-18 Credit Model – A one-time opportunity to complete 9-18 credits of early childhood coursework.
- Regional Support – Supports engagement in one technical college course (3 credits)

<b>T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin - Credential Breakdown</b>		
	<b>Contracts</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Administrator Credential	324	41%
Family Child Care Credential	5	1%
Inclusion Credential	25	3%
Infant/Toddler Credential	245	31%
Leadership Credential	26	3%
Program Development Credential	17	2%
Preschool Credential	135	17%
Afterschool/Youth Development Credential	12	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 2.4. REWARD Wisconsin

The REWARD Wisconsin Stipend Program is a compensation and retention initiative for members of the early care and education workforce who are at Registry Level 9 or higher. Incremental salary supplements are awarded based on one's educational attainments and longevity in the field. This program encourages increased education and retention through increased compensation.

<b>REWARD Wisconsin Activity</b>	
Active Agreements during the FY	2,985
Recipients active during the FY	2,072
Applicants Awarded this quarter	1,543
First Time recipients	385
Average Years of Experience	12.4
Average Years at Program	8.9
Turnover rate	47, 3.0% <sup>1</sup>
Revocation rate	57, or 3.7% <sup>2</sup>
Average Stipend	\$569
Recipients who have received T.E.A.C.H.	376, or 24.3%
Programs Represented	860
Children Served	57,000
Counties Served – by Employment	67
Counties Served – by Residence	69
<sup>1</sup> Of the 47 turnovers, 34 went to other childcare position. 13 left the field.	
<sup>2</sup> Of the 57, 34 were because the recipient no longer met eligibilities. 23 were for unreturned materials.	

## 3. Early Care Regulation (Licensing and Certification)

Licensing and Certification requirements for family child care, group child care and day camps promote practices intended to enhance the health, safety and welfare of children. The Department's DECE works to ensure licensing and certification requirements are met through inspections of child care facilities. Types of regulated child care include:

- Certified Care (3 or fewer children under the age of 7)
- Licensed Family Child Care (up to 8 children under the age of 7)
- Licensed Group Child Care (9 or more children under the age of 7)
- Day Camp (seasonal program for 4 or more children ages 3 and up)

### 3.1. Licensed Providers, Capacity and Estimated Enrolled Children

As of December 31, 2014, there were 4,266 licensed child care centers and day camps in Wisconsin. This compares to 4,384 licensed child care facilities at the end of 2013. This is a drop of over 2% in the total number of licensed child care centers in the state.

Of the 4,266 licensed centers, 2,301 are licensed group centers, 1,889 are licensed family centers and 76 are licensed day camps. The number of family child care centers dropped by almost 5% between 2013 and 2014. The number of group child care centers decreased by about 1%. The number of day camps decreased by 2 in 2014.

The decrease in family child care centers in Wisconsin is consistent with an overall decrease in family child care centers nationwide over the past five years, according to data collected by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies/Child Care Aware.

Despite the decrease in total numbers of child care centers and day camps, total daytime and night-time capacity overall remained about the same between 2013 and 2014. Daytime capacity for all licensed care in 2014 was 158,286, compared to 158,829 in 2013. The total night-time capacity for all licensed care was 11,613 in 2014, compared to 11,676 in 2013.

An estimated 225,964 children were served in licensed child care centers and day camps in 2014, about the same as the estimate of children served in 2013.

<b>Licensed Child Care</b>				
	<b>Total No. of Providers</b>	<b>Total Daytime Capacity</b>	<b>Total Night-time Capacity</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Enrolled Children*</b>
Licensed Group	2,301	135,893	9,194	192,965
Licensed Family	1,889	14,958	2,419	23,111
Licensed Day Camps	76	7,435	0	9,888
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,266</b>	<b>158,286</b>	<b>11,613</b>	<b>225,964</b>
<i>*The estimated number of enrolled children in licensed care is calculated by multiplying licensed capacity by 1.33. Due to part-time care, licensed slots are often filled by more than one child.</i>				

#### Monitoring of Licensed Centers

BECR conducted 9,399 child care site visits in 2014 to monitor, provide technical assistance, verify compliance and conduct complaint investigations. This compares to 9,975 child care site visits in 2013. Of these child care on-site visits, 276 were conducted in unregulated child care locations, in response to allegations of unlicensed care.

BECR received 1,165 complaints concerning licensed child care centers in 2014, with 591 complaints substantiated and 647 complaints unsubstantiated. There were also 97 complaints relating to unlicensed providers that were substantiated while 201 complaints were not substantiated.

### 3.2. Certified Child Care Centers and Capacity

As of December 31, 2014, there were 1,215 certified family providers and 8 certified school-age programs. This is an 18% decrease in certified providers, compared to 2013. An estimated 7,796 children were served in certified child care in 2014.

The following table shows the number and capacity of certified child care centers and estimated number of children enrolled in certified care in 2014.

<b>Certified Child Care</b>				
	<b>Total No. of Providers</b>	<b>Total Daytime Capacity</b>	<b>Total Nighttime Capacity</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Enrolled Children*</b>
Certified Family	1,215	Up to 6 Children	Up to 6 Children	7,290
Certified School-Age	8	381	N/A	506
<i>*The estimated number of enrolled children in certified family care is calculated by multiplying the number of providers by 6. The estimated number of enrolled children in certified school-age care is calculated by multiplying capacity by 1.33. Due to part-time care, slots are often filled by more than one child.</i>				

### **Monitoring of Certified Child Care Centers**

Monitoring of certified family child care and certified school-age care is conducted by certifiers employed by the counties, tribes, subcontracted agencies and the Milwaukee Early Care Administration. Certifiers conducted 2,567 visits to certified centers in 2014 to monitor, provide technical assistance, verify compliance and conduct complaint investigations.

### **3.3. Enforcement Actions**

In 2014, BECR initiated 1,182 enforcement actions. The most frequently issued enforcement actions were warning letters (413), orders (301), and forfeitures (267).

### **3.4. Caregiver Background Checks**

During 2014, the BECR Caregiver Background Unit (CBU) completed 6,074 Department of Justice background checks and 1,427 FBI background checks. In addition, the BECR CBU fielded nearly 3,000 phone inquiries related to background checks. BECR staff processed 7,392 Background Information Disclosure forms from 4,042 licensed child care facilities.

## **4. Program Integrity**

Activities within the Bureau of Program Integrity (BPI) are designed to ensure financial stability and compliance within Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar. BPI oversees and monitors all activities related to program integrity within counties, tribes, child care providers/programs, and program participants. The purpose of BPI is to:

- Ensure a presence of dedicated leadership, promoting statewide integrity;
- Improve and strengthen program integrity;
- Enhance the focus on regional fraud prevention, detection, and investigations; and,
- Provide policy and procedural guidance to counties, tribes, and W-2 agencies regarding local program integrity and anti-fraud efforts.

The BPI consists of three (3) units with a total of thirty (30) permanent staff:

- Program Integrity Unit – Madison;
- Program Integrity Unit – Milwaukee; and
- Fraud Detection and Investigation Unit (Anti-Fraud Task Force).



<b>Bureau of Program Integrity Statistics</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2009 – 2014</b>
Provider Fraud Referrals Received	>1,900	>11,440
Provider Investigations Completed	336	1,801
Provider Criminal Conviction and/or Guilty Plea	5	42
Established Client Intentional Program Violations*	231	394

\* Intentional Program Violation (IPV) means an individual is intentionally providing false or misleading statements, withholding information or committing an act that violates the state or federal laws for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing, or trafficking benefits.

<b>Provider Investigation Outcomes</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2009 – 2014</b>
Termination and Overpayment	17	463
Overpayment Only	115	461
No Overpayment	204	877
TOTAL	336	1,801

<b>Wisconsin Shares Provider Overpayments, Collections and Ordered Restitution</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2009 - 2014</b>
Overpayments Established	\$611,039	\$17,300,000
Overpayments Referred for Collection	\$1,400,000	\$12,100,000
Overpayment to Pay Criminal Restitution	\$490,600	\$3,200,000

## 5. Milwaukee Early Care Administration

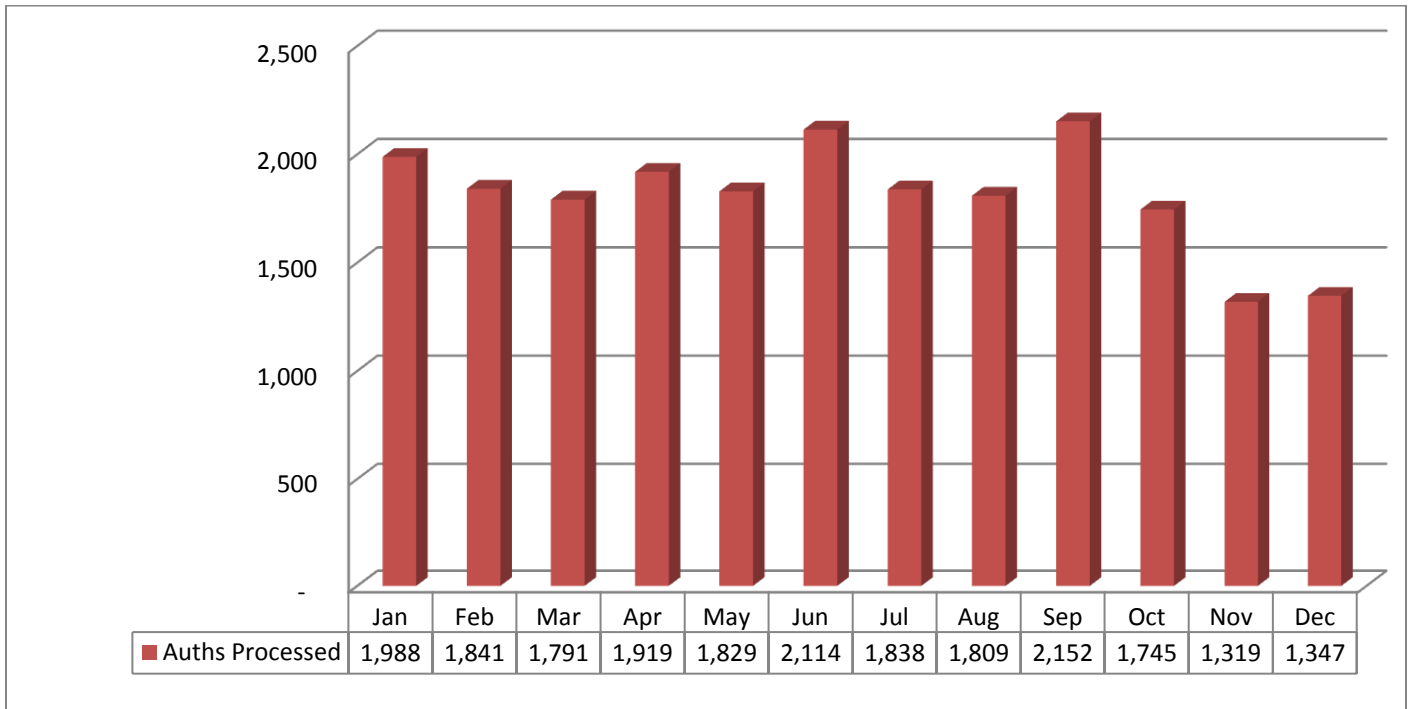
Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) is responsible for providing access to affordable, high-quality child care and early education experiences, enhancing the development of children and supporting their families in work and parenting roles in Milwaukee County. MECA provides many services to Milwaukee County including:

- Authorization Services for Wisconsin Shares recipients;
- Provider Services to ensure timely subsidy payments to child care providers;
- Child Care Certification; and,
- Client Program Integrity of the Wisconsin Shares program.

MECA works in combination with Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MilES) to determine and manage participant eligibility and services of the Wisconsin Shares program. MilES manages all aspects of Income Maintenance, determining eligibility and issuing benefits to Milwaukee County residents.

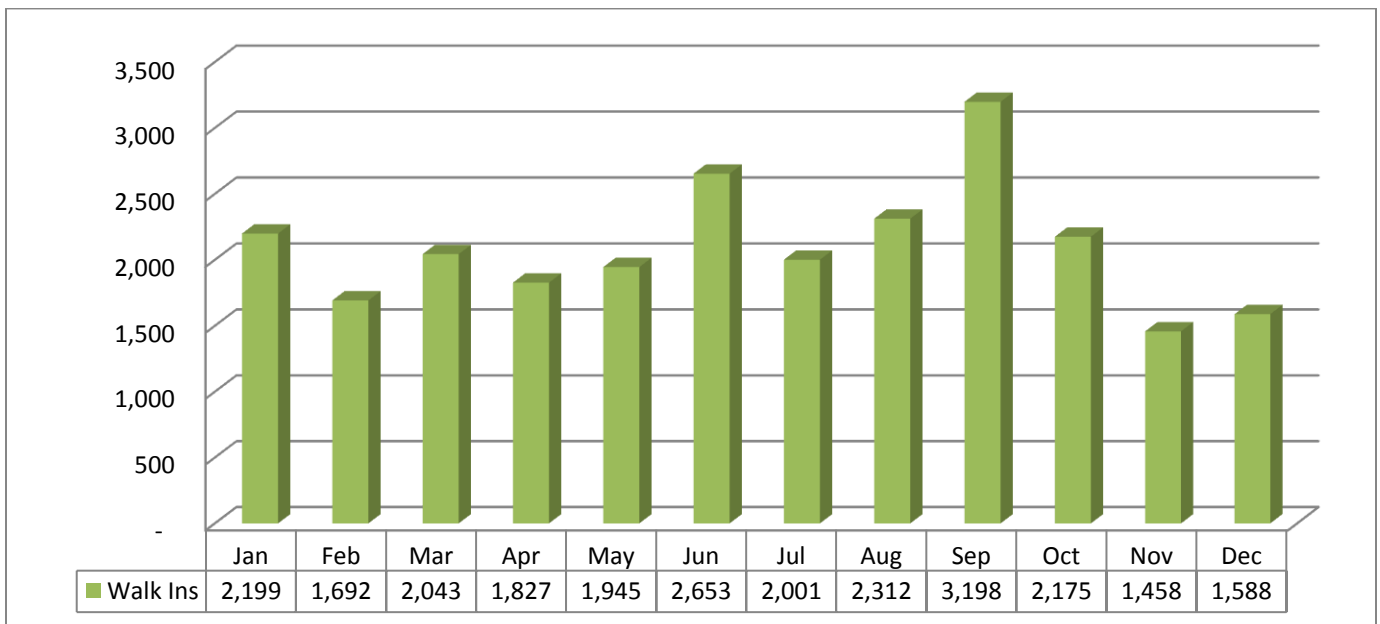
## Number of Authorizations Processed

In 2014, there were a total of 21,692 authorizations processed in Milwaukee County.



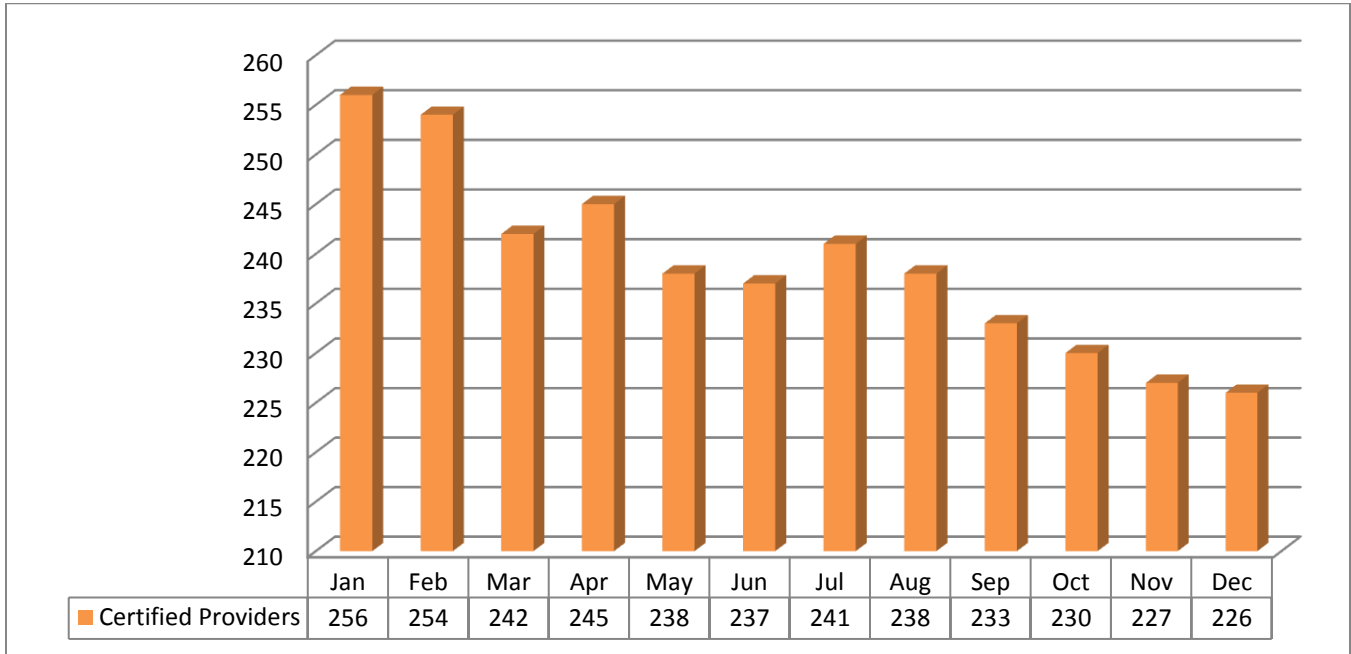
## Number of Walk-In Services

Milwaukee County offers services and information to families through the Internet, over the phone, and face-to-face with walk-in services. In 2014 Milwaukee County served 25,091 individuals through walk-in service.



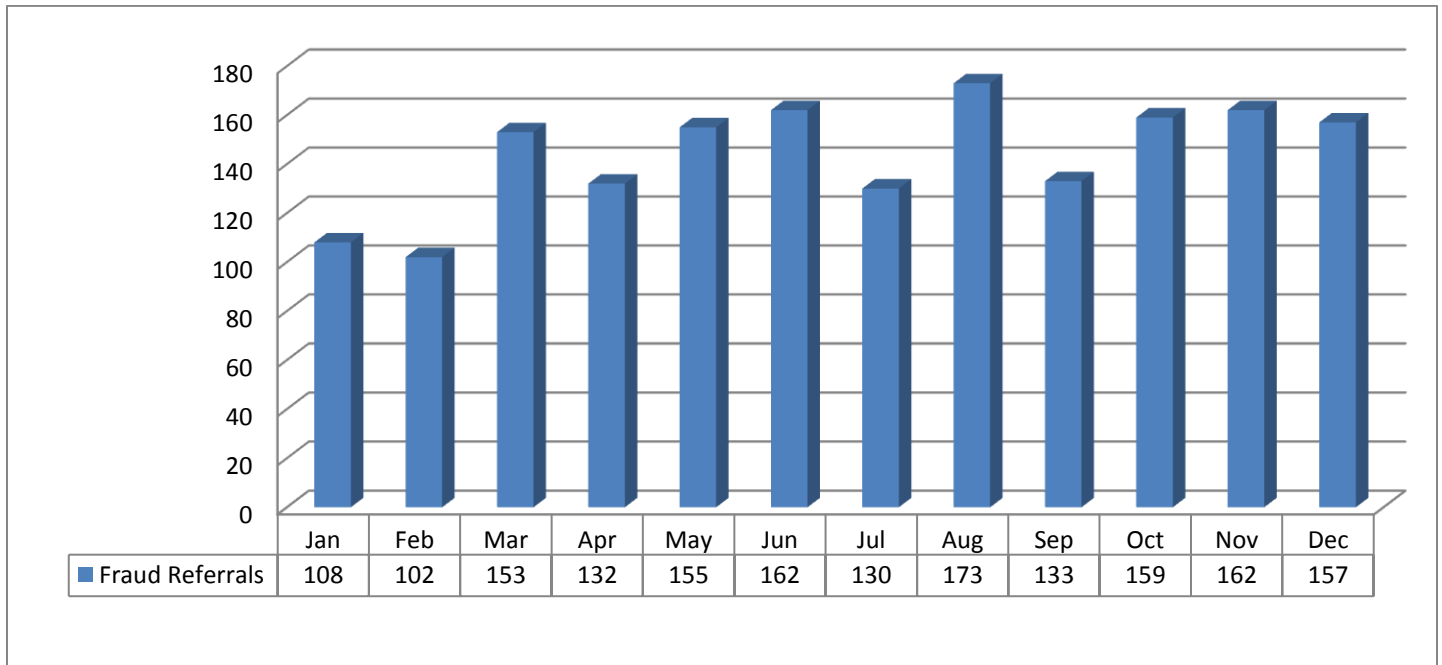
## Number of Certified Providers in Milwaukee County

In 2014, Milwaukee County saw a decrease of certified providers. In January 2014 Milwaukee County had 256 certified providers; by December 2014 Milwaukee County had 30 fewer certified providers, 226.



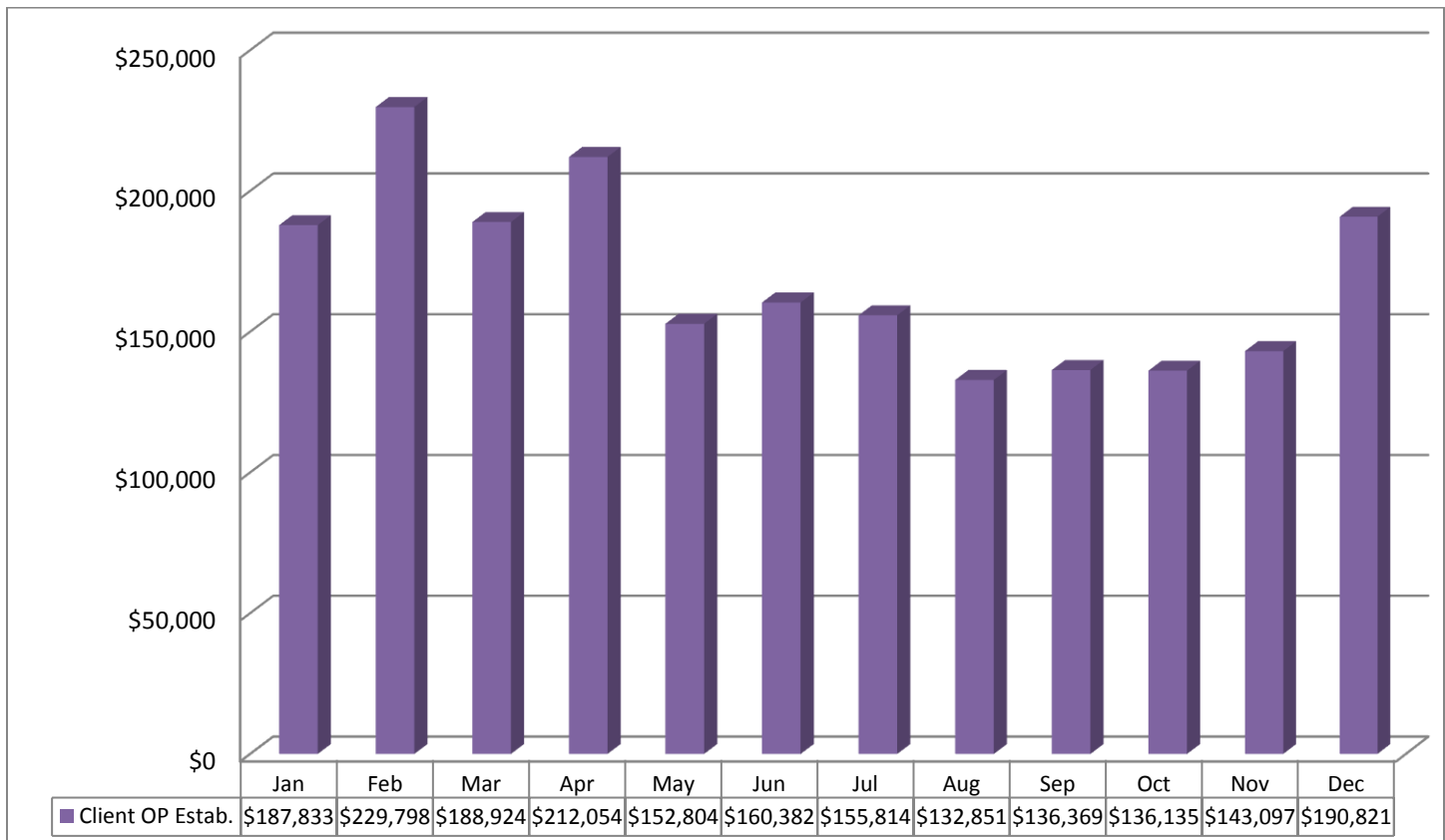
## Fraud Referrals Received

A total of 1,726 fraud referrals were received by MECA in 2014.



## Client Overpayments Established

MECA established \$2,026,882.00 in client overpayments in 2014.



## 6. Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) is a federal grant awarded to Wisconsin in 2013 in order to enhance the system of early childhood. RTT-ELC is a cross-departmental grant that uses the talent, experience, vision, and programs of three state departments: Children and Families (designated as the lead agency by the Governor), Public Instruction, and Health Services.

**Project 1:** Under the Grant Manager’s leadership, the state will develop a public-private partnership to enhance resources available and sustain the activities of this grant.

- Plans were made in 2014 for a Public-Private Partnership RFP that will be issued at the end of May 2015.

**Project 2:** The goals of Project 2 are to expand child care provider knowledge of comprehensive child screening and communication with parents about screening findings and to strengthen training and technical assistance for providers serving special populations of children with high needs.

- 19 child care providers received a total of 66 hours of on-site technical consultation specific to screening with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire in addition to their standard YoungStar hours.
- Resources were created for providers serving children with disabilities or special needs and their families including a resources section on the YoungStar website and plans for recording disability-specific trainings in coordination with Milwaukee Early Childhood Administration Special

Needs Support Program (MECA SNSP) and making them available on-line at no cost to child care providers statewide.

**Project 3:** The goal of Project 3 is to provide guidance for further collaboration and coordination with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Superintendent's 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) Task Force.

- Created an annual collaborative report between DCF and DPI compiling key data on 4K and 4K Community Approach (4KCA).
- Supported annual meetings between 4K and other early childhood partners.

**Project 4:** The goal of Project 4 is to increase the number of high-needs families informed about and understanding the importance of high quality child care programming and selecting 3, 4, and 5 Star rated YoungStar child care settings. This project also includes activities targeted to improve the YoungStar formal rating process.

- The number of high-needs families who are informed about and understand the importance of high quality care and education increased through the YoungStar Media Campaign. In 2014 the YoungStar website underwent major revisions making it more user-friendly, 3 videos were created explaining YoungStar and the importance of early childhood, and plans were finalized for a paid advertising campaign in early 2015.
- An intensive training was provided for all YoungStar Technical Consultants on the Environment Rating Scales by researchers who developed the tool at the University of North Carolina.
- All YoungStar Formal Raters received training and are now using Branagh software to conduct all formal ratings.

**Project 5:** The goals of Project 5 are to expand T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, provide training and technical assistance to expand competencies of the early care workforce in YoungStar, and provide incentives to providers that progress to higher YoungStar Star ratings.

- 59 child care providers received a total of 368 hours on-site technical consultation on the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards in addition to their standard YoungStar hours.
- 24 child care providers received a total of 185 hours of on-site technical consultation on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competence in addition to their standard YoungStar hours.
- 416 child care providers received Challenge Awards for increasing their Star rating during 2013.
- 1,048 Registry coupons were issued. 56% of these coupons were used for new applications and 84% of coupons were used by providers working in 2 or 3 Star rated programs.
- Funds were issued to 8 Institutes of Higher Education to provide credit-based instruction at no cost to 2 and 3 Star rated YoungStar providers. This credit-based instruction will be offered in community settings, with individualized support so that child care providers can successfully complete one of four Registry Credentials.

**Project 6:** The goal of Project 6 is to answer the following research questions: (1) Determine if higher-rated programs provide higher quality care than lower-rated child care programs, and (2) Assess if children participating in higher-rated care gain more in school readiness than children in lower-rated care.

- Data collection for the YoungStar validation study was completed and analysis was started.

**Project 8:** The goals of Project 8 are to develop a progression of standards for family engagement to determine a mandatory quality indicator point in YoungStar, provide training and technical assistance on YoungStar family engagement standards, target a media outreach campaign to hard-to-reach families, and integrate family engagement strategies into other early learning and development programs.

- A progression of Family Engagement standards was developed for inclusion in the YoungStar evaluation criteria. Plans were developed for offering training and on-site technical assistance on these standards for YoungStar providers.
- An RFP was issued for statewide implementation of Parent Cafés.

### **Project 10: Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Development**

The goal of Project 10 is to develop an early childhood integrated data system with information from the three state agencies. In addition, DCF is building a data warehouse, LIFT (Longitudinal Information on Family TouchPoints), in order to increase DCF's capacity to match data across programs.

- A "Literature Review" of current research activities was conducted.
- A requirements document for the first iteration of the data warehouse build was completed.

# Attachment 1: DECE Organization Chart

## Division of Early Care and Education

