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Supervised Visitation Program Annual Report

Federal Fiscal Year 2017

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INTRODUCTION

This annual report on the Supervised Visitation Program (Program), is submitted to the Governor, the Legislature and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:12-11. The New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) prepared the report that covers the period of October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017. This report reflects data gathered from the visitation programs operated in the counties that are overseen by the AOC Family Practice Division. The 2017 report was delayed in order to confirm consistency in the vicinages' data collection processes, ensuring greater accuracy of the reported outcomes.

In 1984, the Legislature enacted the Supervised Visitation Program (codified N.J.S.A. 2A:12-7 et seq.), recognizing that “the inability of a parent to spend time with a child poses serious psychological problems to both the parent and child and prevents the growth of a normal, healthy relationship.” The Legislature sought to preserve the benefits of bonding between the child and the absent parent while ensuring the safety and welfare of the child.

Annually since 1997, the New Jersey Judiciary has received Federal Access and Visitation grant funds to maintain the Program. The grant funding is used for the establishment and/or continuation programs that support and facilitate non-custodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. The funds are distributed to the counties to fund their local programs based on need and the number of litigants served. Twenty of the twenty-one counties participate in the funded program; only Bergen County does not, but provides county funded visitation services.

The Program offers both supervised visitation and neutral exchange services by identifying safe facilities in local communities for visitations to take place and by enlisting volunteers to monitor these often-difficult visits. Neutral exchange services encompasses the supervision of the transfer of a child from one parent to another. The supervision is limited to the exchanges.

Training has consistently been an important part of continuous program improvement. For example, in December 2016, the court staff and volunteers received training from Dr. Gregory Firestone, President of My Florida Mediator and an internationally recognized mediator, mediation trainer and public speaker. The topic of the training was “Getting to Yes, And”—Learn Comedy Improv and More to Enhance Your Mediation and Collaborative Skillset. During the interactive training, participants were able to learn and engage in comedy improv and other skill-building activities designed to promote conflict resolution, interpersonal acceptance, deep listening and collaboration.

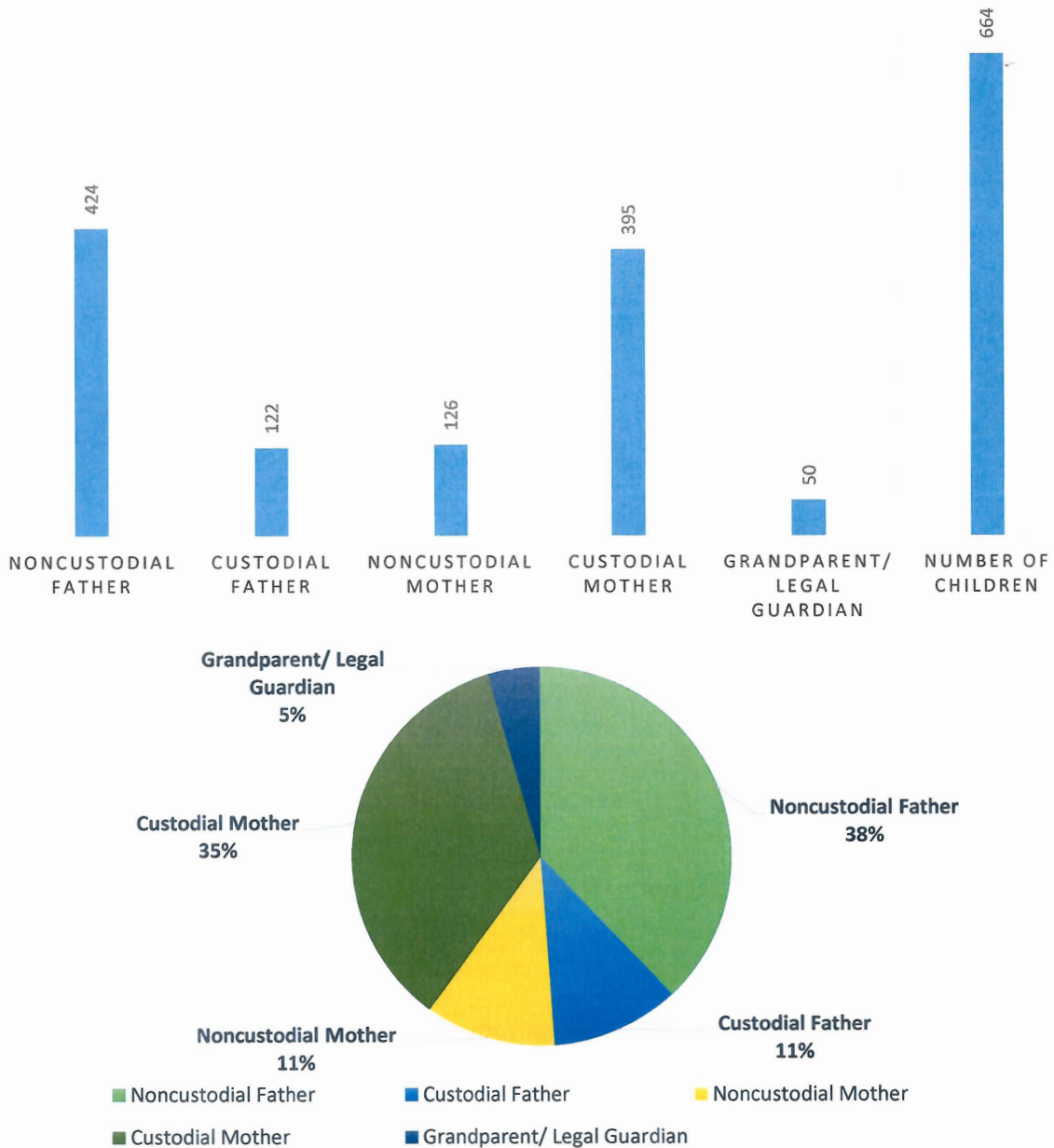
The Supervised Visitation Program is a part of the New Jersey Judiciary's effort to deliver effective services to children and parents.

SUPERVISED VISITATION STATISTICAL DATA

Client Information

The Supervised Visitation program aims to provide services that support and facilitate noncustodial parent access to and time with their children. However, many of the allowable services outlined in statute involve the participation of both parents. As depicted in Chart A below, of the 1,117 parties that received services, noncustodial fathers and custodial mothers represent the largest groups served at 38 percent and 35 percent, respectively.

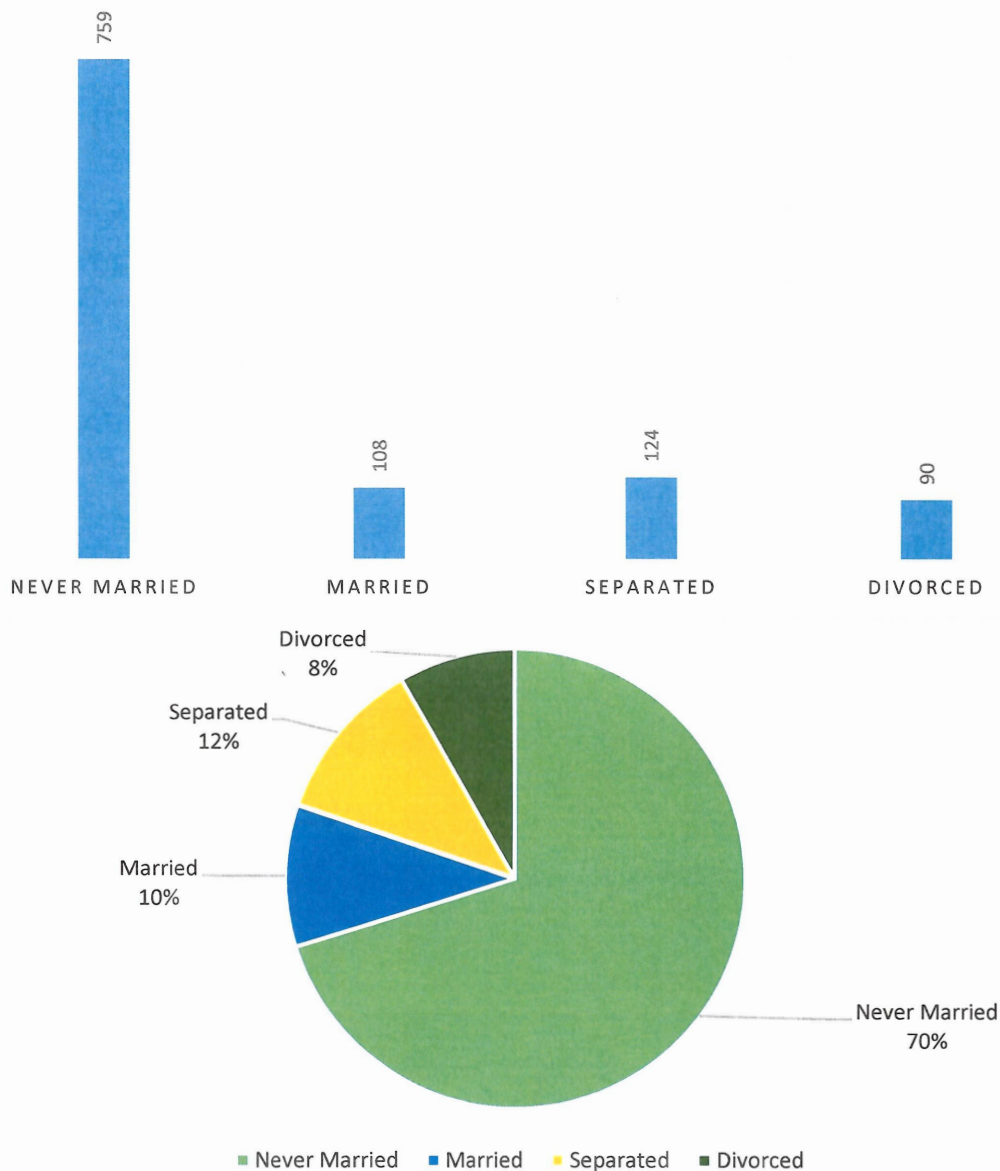
Chart A



Marital Status of Participants

Unmarried parents must often navigate multiple, frequently overlapping, legal proceedings to resolve issues of child support and parenting time. The Supervised Visitation program can bridge this gap by offering a reasonable and affordable pathway for noncustodial parents to seek access to and parenting time with their children. As depicted in Chart B below, in the Supervised Visitation programs overseen by the Judiciary, 70 percent of parents were never married to the other parent.

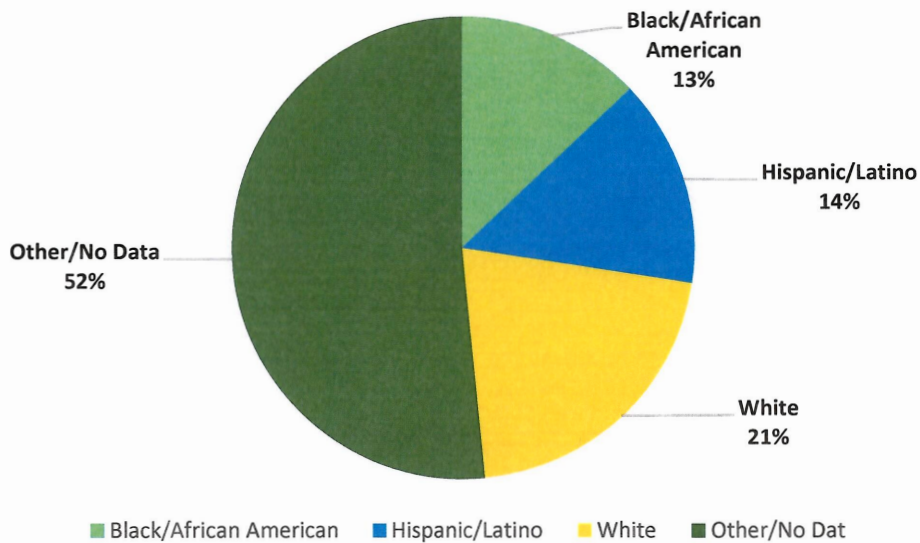
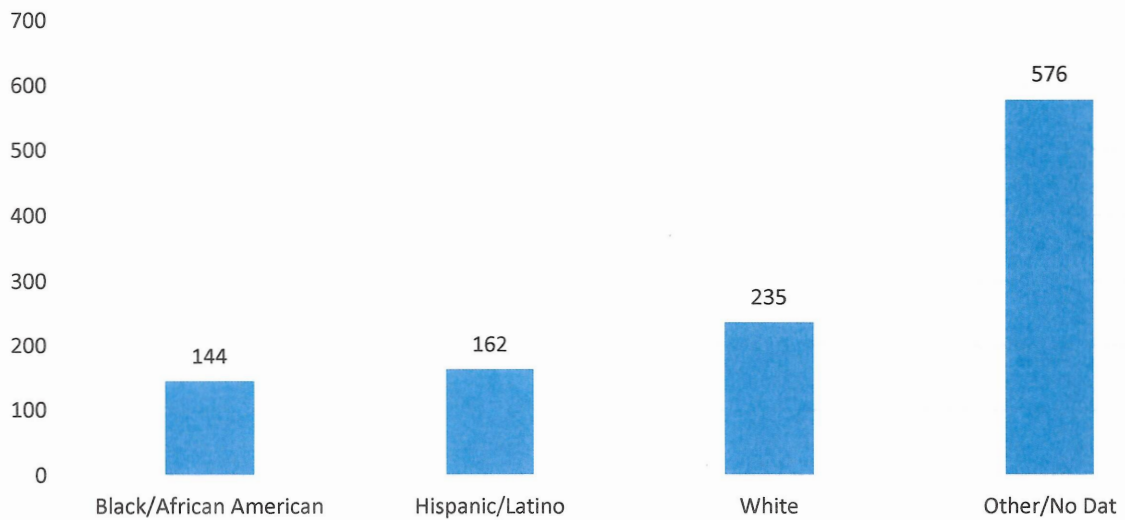
Chart B



Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity

The majority of participating parents self-identify as belonging to one of three racial or ethnic groups: White, Black/African American, and Hispanic or Latino. Of the 1,117 parties that received services, the data revealed that white parents constituted 21 percent of the supervised visitation caseload, Black/African Americans constituted 13 percent, and Hispanic or Latino participants accounted for almost 14 percent of the total caseload. The remaining 52 percent of participants self-identified among the following racial groupings: American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, two or more races, or other/data not reported.

Chart C



When both parents are involved in the lives of their child(ren), it positively impacts their development. Programs designed to increase non-custodial contact, such as Supervised Visitation, provides these valuable opportunities to increase the child's social, emotional and academic growth. The Judiciary will continue to maintain effective communication and interaction between internal and external stakeholders in the supervised visitation process. This will ensure the existence and application of effective standardized practices throughout the state with a focus on fairness and quality service, as well as the ongoing availability of the visitation services.



Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts

Dated: February 4, 2019

I. Administration of the Program

The following is a description of the New Jersey Judiciary's Supervised Visitation Program.

A. Administrator

N.J.S.A. 2A:12-7 et seq. designates the Administrative Director of the Courts as the Administrator of the Program. The legislation sets forth the specific duties and responsibilities of the Administrator, which includes arranging for technical assistance to Program Coordinators in the counties.

B. State Coordinator

The State Coordinator of the Program, as part of the staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts, serves as the Program's statewide manager, ensuring its compliance with the legislation, Court Rules and the Procedures Manual. The State Coordinator also provides technical assistance to the counties.

C. County Coordinators

In each county, a Supervised Visitation Program County Coordinator (hereafter referred to as County Coordinator) manages the Program at the local (Superior Court) level, reviews all cases referred for program participation, schedules sites and volunteers to meet visitation schedules, and submits statistical data to the State Coordinator. The County Coordinator ensures that the screening, training, supervising, and managing of all staff and volunteers in the Program comply with approved standards. County Coordinators report matters specific to the Program to the Vicinage Family Division Manager. (Note: Bergen County is the only county that does not participate in the funded program. However, they also must report matters specific to the program to the Vicinage Family Division Manager.)

II. Community Involvement

The Program depends on the involvement of the community in providing this critically needed service, both in terms of volunteers and community sites.

A. Volunteers

Volunteers are a key component of the Program. Volunteers provide supervision not only during the day, but also during evenings and

weekends so that visitation may occur at times convenient to the families. The volunteers serve as neutral observers, ensuring the safety of the child; they intervene only when necessary.

All volunteers must complete a training course before beginning supervision. The County Coordinators conduct the training under the oversight of and with technical assistance from the Administrative Office of the Courts.

B. Community Sites

Community sites make the Program possible by donating the use of their facilities for the visitations. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:12-7 et seq., the Administrative Director of the Courts must approve all external sites. Sites must be accessible, functional, comfortable, and safe.

III. How the Program Works

A. Referral by the Court to the County Coordinator

The court refers matters to the Program. Referral is appropriate in dissolution, non-dissolution or domestic violence cases where the court is concerned about the physical or emotional welfare of the child and after third-party supervision provisions have been exhausted. Additionally, domestic violence cases awaiting risk assessments may be referred to the Program.

B. Court Order

The court order should clearly state the duration of supervised visitation, the length of visits, the names of the individuals permitted to attend the visitation, and a date to return to court for determining whether supervision should continue.

C. Pre-Screening Interview

The County Coordinator conducts a comprehensive interview of both parties. The purpose of the interview is to gather information, and, if appropriate, to arrange a tentative schedule for the visitations. During the interview, the parties are provided a copy of the rules of visitation that will govern each session. In some instances, the interview may reveal issues of concern that call into question the suitability of the case for the Program. In those situations, the judge may reevaluate the matter.

D. Role of the observer in the visitation

Each visitation must include an observer. The observer can be a County Coordinator, court staff, or a volunteer. Their role is to serve as a neutral observer and to monitor closely the visitation, intervening on behalf of the child when necessary. The observer may terminate the visitation session if in the observer's judgement, the rules of the visitation are violated or if continuation of the visit is stressful to the child or threatening to the welfare of the child.

IV. Access and Visitation Grant

Since 1997, the New Jersey Judiciary has been the recipient of Federal Access and Visitation grant funds to sustain the Program. The grant requires the funds be used by the states to establish and/or continue programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. In FFY 2016, the New Jersey Judiciary received \$211,060.00 in funds through the Federal Access and Visitation grant. These funds are allocated to the counties based on need and number of children and parents served.

V. Appendices

- A. Statistical Data
- B. Supervised Visitation Site List

Appendix A

Statistical Data

This data is required to be reported annually to the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Note: These appendices reflect data only on the twenty counties that accept Program funds. Bergen County provides visitation services with county funds and these are not included in these data

**TABLE ONE
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

NEW CASES

This chart reflects the number of new cases added to the Program in FFY 2017.

County*	New Cases
Atlantic	24
Burlington	72
Camden	5
Cape May	5
Cumberland	32
Essex	74
Gloucester	34
Hudson	58
Hunterdon	4
Mercer	47
Middlesex	45
Monmouth	28
Morris	3
Ocean	13
Passaic	38
Salem	3
Somerset	2
Sussex	0
Union	7
Warren	6
Total	500

*Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

**TABLE TWO
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

CLIENT INFORMATION

This chart reflects the visitation participants in each county and their relationship to the child.

County*	Non-Custodial Parent Father	Custodial Parent Father	Non-Custodial Parent Mother	Custodial Parent Mother	Grandparent/ Legal Guardian	Children in Common
Atlantic	19	14	14	17	8	31
Burlington	54	13	20	47	5	99
Camden	4	2	2	2	2	5
Cape May	3	2	1	4	2	7
Cumberland	25	5	7	23	0	39
Essex	56	11	16	58	5	96
Gloucester	22	11	11	21	3	44
Hudson	45	13	13	45	2	81
Hunterdon	2	2	2	2	0	4
Mercer	39	8	9	37	8	55
Middlesex	65	17	8	50	6	61
Monmouth	23	6	5	21	4	44
Morris	5	0	0	5	0	3
Ocean	10	3	5	10	4	19
Passaic	30	8	6	33	1	51
Salem	0	3	3	0	0	3
Somerset	2	2	2	2	0	3
Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union	15	0	0	15	0	11
Warren	5	2	2	3	0	8
Total	424	122	126	395	50	664

*Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

**TABLE THREE
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

MARITAL STATUS*

This chart reflects the number of visitation participants in each county within the stated categories at the time of entering the Program.

County**	Never Married to Each Other	Married to Each Other	Separated from Each Other	Divorced from Each Other	Data Not Reported
Atlantic	57	2	0	6	0
Burlington	66	30	30	8	0
Camden	10	0	0	0	0
Cape May	10	0	0	0	0
Cumberland	52	0	0	8	0
Essex	93	0	38	10	0
Gloucester	50	14	0	8	0
Hudson	72	18	18	8	0
Hunterdon	8	0	0	0	0
Mercer	76	2	8	10	0
Middlesex	90	18	20	12	0
Monmouth	49	4	0	2	0
Morris	4	0	4	2	0
Ocean	18	0	6	6	0
Passaic	62	10	0	6	0
Salem	6	0	0	0	0
Somerset	6	2	0		0
Sussex	0	0	0	0	0
Union	22	4	0	4	0
Warren	8	4	0	0	0
Total	759	108	124	90	0

*Note: The data includes both Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships

**Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

**TABLE FOUR
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

RACE/ETHNICITY

This chart reflects the number of visitation participants in each county that voluntarily self-identify as the stated race/ethnicity.

County*	Am. Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic Or Latino	Native Hawaiian/ Pac. Islander	White	Two or More Races	Data Not Reported
Atlantic	0	0	5	4	0	16	0	47
Burlington	0	1	20	3	1	44	0	70
Camden	0	0	2	2	0	8	0	0
Cape May	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	8
Cumberland	2	0	6	8	0	12	2	30
Essex	0	1	40	19	0	9	3	74
Gloucester	0	0	6	1	0	27	0	34
Hudson	0	2	16	44	0	20	10	26
Hunterdon	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	3
Mercer	0	0	15	18	0	15	0	53
Middlesex	0	1	7	15	2	18	0	103
Monmouth	0	0	4	0	0	14	0	41
Morris	0	0	0	4	0	4	2	0
Ocean	0	0	2	6	0	20	0	4
Passaic	0	0	5	22	0	11	0	40
Salem	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
Somerset	0	0	1	2	0	4	0	1
Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union	0	0	12	10	4	0	4	0
Warren	0	0	2	2	0	4	0	4
Total	2	5	144	162	7	235	21	541

*Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

**TABLE FIVE
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

PARTICIPANTS ANNUAL INCOME

This chart reflects the number of visitation participants in each county that voluntarily identify as having an income within the stated range.

County*	Less Than \$10,000	\$10,000 - \$19,999	\$20,000 - \$29,999	\$30,000 - \$39,999	\$40,000 and above	Data Not Reported
Atlantic	0	4	4	1	0	63
Burlington	17	12	14	5	7	84
Camden	6	0	2	2	2	0
Cape May	0	0	0	0	0	12
Cumberland	4	2	2	1	4	47
Essex	10	8	8	5	1	101
Gloucester	2	5	3	1	5	52
Hudson	30	12	10	2	2	62
Hunterdon	2	1	1	0	0	4
Mercer	3	4	8	6	9	71
Middlesex	2	6	6	4	11	117
Monmouth	9	3	1	2	1	43
Morris	2	2	2	2	2	0
Ocean	2	8	8	4	4	6
Passaic	2	2	2	0	1	71
Salem	1	1	0	1	0	3
Somerset	2	2	0	0	4	0
Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union	1	0	0	2	0	27
Warren	4	0	1	1	0	6
Total	99	72	72	39	53	769

*Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

**TABLE SIX
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

SERVICES PROVIDED

This chart reflects the number of visits funded through the Access and Visitation Grant.

County*	Supervised Visitation
Atlantic	72
Burlington	139
Camden	12
Cape May	40
Cumberland	60
Essex	146
Gloucester	68
Hudson	118
Hunterdon	10
Mercer	101
Middlesex	173
Monmouth	59
Morris	10
Ocean	32
Passaic	78
Salem	3
Somerset	6
Sussex	84
Union	30
Warren	12
Total	1253

*Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

**TABLE SEVEN
SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017**

CHILD SUPPORT CASES

This chart reflects the number of parties in the Program that voluntarily identified as receiving or paying a child support.

County*	Non-Custodial Parent Father	Custodial Parent Father	Non-Custodial Parent Mother	Custodial Parent Mother	Grandparent/ Legal Guardian
Atlantic	8	4	6	9	1
Burlington	0	0	0	0	0
Camden	1	2	2	2	0
Cape May	2	0	0	2	0
Cumberland	0	0	0	0	0
Essex	112	2	36	0	0
Gloucester	19	7	8	22	7
Hudson	0	25	0	93	0
Hunterdon	2	1	1	2	0
Mercer	39	8	9	37	3
Middlesex	0	0	0	0	0
Monmouth	0	0	0	1	0
Morris	3	0	0	3	0
Ocean	11	3	5	9	2
Passaic	30	8	6	33	1
Salem	0	3	3	0	0
Somerset	1	0	0	1	0
Sussex	0	0	0	0	0
Union	8	0	0	8	0
Warren	3	2	2	3	0
Total	239	65	78	225	14

*Note: Bergen County does not participate in the Program.

Appendix B

Supervised Visitation Site List

Atlantic:

A Chance for a Real Change

1040 Neumark Avenue
Pleasantville, NJ 08232
(609) 727-9335
Patricia Miles-Jackson, Director

The Alcove Center for Grieving Children and Families

376 Tilton Road Rear
Northfield, NJ 08225
(609) 727-9335
Mindy Shemtov, Executive Director

Bergen:

Division of Family Guidance

One Bergen County Plaza, Second Floor
Hackensack, NJ 07601
(201) 336-7398

Burlington:

Burlington County Superior Court (Wednesday evening)

49 Rancocas Road
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
(609) 518-2517
Andrea Kearney, Program Coordinator

Catholic Charities (Tuesday/Wednesday evenings; Saturday morning)

115 West Pearl Street
Burlington NJ 08016
(609) 394-5157
Amilia Gallagher, Supervising Monitor

The Fatherhood Connection (Tuesday evening)

Willingboro, NJ 08046
(609) 877-1076
Tashon Jackson, Director

Camden:

The Center for Family Services

584 Benson Street
Camden NJ 08103
(609) 463-6645
Doris Vidal, Program Coordinator

Cape May:

Families Matter, LLC

899 Bayshore Road
Villas, NJ 08251
(609) 886-8666
Patricia Campbell, Director

Cumberland:

Cumberland County Courthouse

PO Box 866
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
(856) 453-4553
Stephanie Shaffer, Program Coordinator

Robin's Nest

42 South Delsea Drive
Glassboro, NJ 08028
(856) 881-8689 ext. 190

Essex County:

Essex County Veterans Courthouse

50 West Market Street
Newark, NJ 07102
(973) 693-5521
Gloria Brown, Program Coordinator

Gloucester:

Gloucester County Courthouse (Wednesday evenings and during court hours)

70 Hunter Street
Woodbury, NJ 08096
(856) 686-7504
Chastity Robinson, Program Coordinator

Hudson:

Superior Court of New Jersey, Family Division

595 Newark Avenue
Room 218
Jersey City, NJ 07306
(201) 795-6740

Hunterdon County:

Hunterdon County Family Division

65 Park Avenue
Flemington, NJ 08822
(908) 237-5922
Christine Reilly, Program Coordinator

Mercer County:

El Centro (Catholic Charities)

327 S. Broad Street
Trenton NJ 08608
(609) 954-7487
Robert Hernandez, Director

Mercer County Courthouse

209 South Broad Street
Trenton, NJ 08690
(609) 571-4377
Paula Andrews, Program Coordinator

Middlesex County:

Middlesex County Family Court Building

120 New Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08903
(732) 519-3286
Wilda Robinson, Program Coordinator

Monmouth County:

Monmouth County Superior Court

PO Box 1252
71 Monument Park
Freehold, NJ 07728
(732) 677-4050

Morris County:

Center for Evaluation and Counseling

1719 Route 10 East
Parsippany, NJ 07054
(973) 829-6960

Ocean County:

Ocean County Justice Complex

PO Box 2191
120 Hooper Avenue
Toms River, NJ 08754-2191
(732) 929-2037 ext. 3124
Terri A'Hearn, Program Coordinator

Preferred Children's Services

1200 River Avenue
PO Box 2036
Lakewood, NJ 08701
(732) 905-5106 ext. 101
Stacy M. Welch, Program Director

Saint Francis Counseling Center

4700 Long Beach Boulevard
Brant Beach, NJ 08701
(609) 494-8861 ext. 182
Lori Tomaro, Program Director

Passaic County:

Paterson YMCA

128 Ward Street
Paterson, NJ 07505
(973) 247-8858
Blanca Bravo, Program Coordinator

Salem:

Family Intake

PO Box 233
Salem, NJ 08079
(856) 935-7510 ext. 8576

Somerset County:

Catholic Charities

540 Route 22 East
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
(908) 722-1881
Esther Iannetta, Program Coordinator

Sussex County:

First Baptist Church (NJCCR), (*Neutral Exchange Only*)

4 East Main Street
Sussex, NJ 07461
(973) 875-9451

Center for Evaluation and Counseling

61 High Street
Newton, NJ 07054
(973) 300-1900

Union County:

Union County Superior Court

Superior Court, Family Division
Union County Courthouse
New Annex Building
Elizabeth, NJ 07207
(908) 659-4604
Nancy Yurek, Program Coordinator

Warren:

Catholic Charities

Phillipsburg Family Service Center
700 Sayre Ave.
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
(908) 454-2074
Susan Reimer, Supervisor