



The AFCARS Report:

California

Preliminary FY¹ 2021 Estimates as of June 28, 2022 - No. 29

SOURCE: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2021 data²

Numbers at a Glance: California

Fiscal Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FY	51,869	52,337	51,268	50,737	47,871
Number entered foster care during the FY	28,016	27,178	28,138	24,748	22,892
Number exited foster care during the FY	28,539	25,879	26,622	23,704	24,199
Number served by the foster care system during the FY	80,408	78,215	77,889	74,441	72,070
Number waiting to be adopted on September 30 of the FY	15,097	14,866	14,436	15,019	15,386
Number waiting to be adopted for whom parental rights (for all living parents) were terminated as of the last day of the FY	7,107	7,098	7,262	6,518	6,945
Number adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during the FY	6,524	6,966	6,981	5,562	6,242

Children in Foster Care on September 30, 2021 - N=47,871

Age as of September 30th	Years	Sex	Percent	Number
Mean	8.4	Male	50%	24,020
Median	8.0	Female	50%	23,849

Age as of September 30th	Percent	Number	Most Recent Placement Setting	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	8%	3,734	Pre-Adoptive Home	4%	1,693
1 Year	8%	4,033	Foster Family Home (Relative)	36%	17,028
2 Years	7%	3,548	Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	47%	22,707
3 Years	6%	2,811	Group Home	3%	1,639
4 Years	5%	2,598	Institution	2%	951
5 Years	5%	2,363	Supervised Independent Living	6%	2,804
6 Years	5%	2,295	Runaway	1%	707
7 Years	4%	2,105	Trial Home Visit	1%	342
8 Years	4%	2,044			
9 Years	4%	1,882			
10 Years	4%	1,860			
11 Years	4%	1,798			
12 Years	4%	1,873			
13 Years	4%	1,986			
14 Years	4%	2,117			
15 Years	5%	2,285			
16 Years	5%	2,373			
17 Years	6%	2,651			
18 Years	2%	1,168			
19 Years	2%	1,135			
20 Years	3%	1,211			

Case Plan Goal	Percent	Number
Reunify with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	36%	16,327
Live with Other Relative(s)	5%	2,445
Adoption	33%	14,883
Long Term Foster Care	4%	1,969
Emancipation	6%	2,914
Guardianship	10%	4,485
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	5%	2,350

¹ 'FY' refers to the Federal Fiscal Year, October 1st through September 30th.

² Data from both the regular and revised AFCARS file submissions received by June 28, 2022 are included in this report. Missing data are excluded from each table. Therefore, the totals within each distribution may not equal the total provided for that subpopulation (e.g. number in care on September 30th may not match the sum across ages for that group)

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number	Time in Care	Months
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	324	Mean	25.4
Asian	1%	615	Median	16.8
Black or African American	18%	8,691		
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	104		
Hispanic (of any race)	56%	26,527		
White	18%	8,683		
Unknown/Unable to Determine	0%	202		
Two or More Races	5%	2,278		

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

Time in Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	4%	1,894
1 - 5 Months	18%	8,540
6 - 11 Months	17%	8,210
12 - 17 Months	13%	6,214
18 - 23 Months	11%	5,242
24 - 29 Months	9%	4,231
30 - 35 Months	6%	3,027
3 - 4 Years	13%	6,048
5 Years or More	9%	4,465

Children Entering Foster Care during FY 2021 - N=22,892

Age at Entry	Years	Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
Mean	6.4	American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	177
Median	5.0	Asian	2%	366
		Black or African American	16%	3,564
		Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	67
		Hispanic (of any race)	57%	12,870
		White	20%	4,447
		Unknown/Unable to Determine	1%	128
		Two or More Races	4%	1,005

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

Age at Entry	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	23%	5,225
1 Year	7%	1,515
2 Years	6%	1,367
3 Years	6%	1,282
4 Years	5%	1,214
5 Years	5%	1,115
6 Years	5%	1,069
7 Years	5%	1,059
8 Years	4%	921
9 Years	4%	850
10 Years	4%	850
11 Years	4%	841
12 Years	4%	874
13 Years	4%	938
14 Years	4%	932
15 Years	4%	893
16 Years	4%	940
17 Years	3%	736
18 Years	1%	147
19 Years	0%	72
20 Years	0%	44

Circumstances Associated with Child's Removal	Percent	Number
Neglect	85%	19,462
Caretaker Inability To Cope	19%	4,272
Physical Abuse	9%	1,995
Drug Abuse (Parent)	8%	1,872
Child Behavior Problem	3%	637
Housing	3%	635
Sexual Abuse	3%	630
Drug Abuse (Child)	3%	606
Alcohol Abuse (Parent)	1%	318
Relinquishment	1%	165
Parent Incarceration	1%	147
Abandonment	0%	93
Parent Death	0%	64
Child Disability	0%	26
Alcohol Abuse (Child)	0%	9

NOTE: These categories are not mutually exclusive, so percentages will total more than 100% and counts will be more than the total number of entries.

Children Exiting Foster Care during FY 2021 - N=24,199

Age at Exit		Years	Race/Ethnicity		Percent	Number	
Mean		7.9	American Indian/Alaska Native		1%	208	
Median		7.0	Asian		2%	399	
			Black or African American		17%	3,992	
			Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		0%	49	
			Hispanic (of any race)		56%	13,493	
			White		19%	4,619	
			Unknown/Unable to Determine		0%	110	
			Two or More Races		5%	1,115	
			NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.				
Age at Exit		Percent	Number	Reason for Discharge		Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year		4%	881	Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)		50%	12,039
1 Year		9%	2,157	Living with Other Relative(s)		0%	0
2 Years		9%	2,084	Adoption		25%	5,963
3 Years		8%	1,759	Emancipation		13%	3,110
4 Years		7%	1,574	Guardianship		11%	2,711
5 Years		6%	1,357	Transfer to Another Agency		1%	299
6 Years		6%	1,321	Runaway		0%	0
7 Years		5%	1,212	Death of Child		0%	49
8 Years		5%	1,077				
9 Years		4%	1,004				
10 Years		4%	984				
11 Years		4%	885				
12 Years		4%	914				
13 Years		4%	873				
14 Years		4%	883				
15 Years		3%	786				
16 Years		3%	786				
17 Years		2%	516				
18 Years		8%	1,811				
19 Years		0%	88				
20 Years		0%	97				
Time in Care		Months					
Mean		24.7					
Median		18.3					
Time in Care		Percent	Number				
Less than 1 Month		6%	1,446				
1 - 5 Months		11%	2,646				
6 - 11 Months		15%	3,713				
12 - 17 Months		17%	3,999				
18 - 23 Months		15%	3,540				
24 - 29 Months		10%	2,305				
30 - 35 Months		6%	1,564				
3 - 4 Years		14%	3,292				
5 Years or More		7%	1,665				

Children Waiting to be Adopted³ on September 30, 2021 - N=15,386

Age as of September 30th			Years	Age at Entry into Foster Care			Years		
Mean			6.0	Mean			3.5		
Median			5.0	Median			2.0		
Age as of September 30th			Percent	Number	Age at Entry into Foster Care			Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year			6%	912	Less than 1 Year			37%	5,760
1 Year			13%	2,003	1 Year			9%	1,341
2 Years			12%	1,889	2 Years			8%	1,153
3 Years			9%	1,376	3 Years			7%	1,085
4 Years			8%	1,155	4 Years			6%	906
5 Years			7%	1,040	5 Years			5%	806
6 Years			6%	963	6 Years			5%	755
7 Years			5%	810	7 Years			4%	659
8 Years			5%	747	8 Years			4%	620
9 Years			4%	684	9 Years			4%	538
10 Years			4%	671	10 Years			3%	471
11 Years			4%	587	11 Years			3%	413
12 Years			4%	540	12 Years			2%	314
13 Years			3%	518	13 Years			1%	215
14 Years			3%	453	14 Years			1%	196
15 Years			3%	458	15 Years			1%	94
16 Years			2%	345	16 Years			0%	35
17 Years			2%	235	17 Years			0%	10
Placement Type			Percent	Number	Race/Ethnicity			Percent	Number
Pre-Adoptive Home			11%	1,683	American Indian/Alaska Native			1%	89
Foster Family Home (Relative)			36%	5,533	Asian			1%	151
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)			51%	7,800	Black or African American			17%	2,560
Group Home			1%	184	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			0%	27
Institution			1%	122	Hispanic (of any race)			56%	8,549
Supervised Independent Living			0%	10	White			20%	3,031
Runaway			0%	49	Unknown/Unable to Determine			1%	78
Trial Home Visit			0%	5	Two or More Races			5%	755
Sex			Percent	Number	NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.				
Male			51%	7,882					
Female			49%	7,504					

³ Waiting children are identified as children who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. Children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation have been excluded from the estimate.

Time in Care		Months	Of Children Waiting for Adoption whose Parents' Parental Rights have been Terminated (N=6,945), Time Elapsed since Termination of Parental Rights as of September 30, 2021		
Mean		31.4			
Median		26.5			
Time in Care		Percent	Number	Time Since TPR	Months
Less than 1 Month		0%	37	Mean	15.0
1 - 5 Months		3%	531	Median	8.0
6 - 11 Months		9%	1,382		
12 - 17 Months		13%	2,007		
18 - 23 Months		17%	2,569		
24 - 29 Months		17%	2,597		
30 - 35 Months		11%	1,688		
3 - 4 Years		21%	3,252		
5 Years or More		9%	1,323		

Children Adopted with Public Agency Involvement in FY 2021⁴ - N=6,242

Age at Adoption		Years	Time Elapsed from Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption			Months	
Mean		5.5	Mean			14.5	
Median		4.0	Median			12.2	
Age at Adoption		Percent	Number	Time Elapsed from Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption		Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year		2%	99	Less than 1 Month		0%	21
1 Year		14%	884	1 - 5 Months		18%	1,115
2 Years		16%	983	6 - 11 Months		31%	1,948
3 Years		12%	725	12 - 17 Months		22%	1,357
4 Years		10%	616	18 - 23 Months		15%	932
5 Years		7%	448	24 - 29 Months		7%	452
6 Years		7%	408	30 - 35 Months		3%	169
7 Years		6%	364	3 - 4 Years		3%	196
8 Years		5%	298	5 Years or More		1%	41
9 Years		4%	250				
10 Years		4%	235				
11 Years		3%	218				
12 Years		3%	168				
13 Years		3%	160				
14 Years		2%	119				
15 Years		1%	91				
16 Years		1%	87				
17 Years		1%	76				
18 Years		0%	10				
19 Years		0%	0				
20 Years		0%	2				
Race/Ethnicity		Percent	Number				
American Indian/Alaska Native		1%	49				
Asian		1%	71				
Black or African American		14%	862				
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		0%	6				
Hispanic (of any race)		53%	3,303				
White		25%	1,526				
Unknown/Unable to Determine		0%	21				
Two or More Races		6%	346				
NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.							

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

⁴ Note that the adoption data reported in this section are from the AFCARS Adoption file. Therefore, the number of adoptions reported here may not equal the number reported as discharges to adoption from foster care.

Adoptive Family Structure	Percent	Number	Sex	Percent	Number
Married Couple	59%	3,609	Male	51%	3,157
Unmarried Couple	7%	450	Female	49%	3,085
Single Female	30%	1,835			
Single Male	4%	233			
Relationship of Adoptive Parents to Child Prior to Adoption	Percent	Number	Receive Adoption Subsidy	Percent	Number
Non-Relative	2%	121	Yes	95%	5,941
Foster Parent	50%	3,080	No	5%	301
Stepparent	0%	2			
Other Relative	48%	2,933			

FY 2021 AFCARS Foster Care Data Release

Definitions and additional supporting information relevant to the populations presented in this report can be found by clicking on the tabs above the area chart displayed when using this link:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>