



The AFCARS Report:

Tennessee

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: Tennessee

Fiscal Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FY	8,558	8,929	9,290	8,839	9,227
Number entered foster care during the FY	6,679	6,888	6,719	5,860	6,185
Number exited foster care during the FY	4,688	5,241	5,081	5,835	5,331
Number served by the foster care system during the FY	13,246	14,170	14,371	14,674	14,558
Number waiting to be adopted on September 30 of the FY	1,322	1,625	1,743	1,829	1,872
Number waiting to be adopted for whom parental rights (for all living parents) were terminated as of the last day of the FY	1,067	999	1,014	982	1,072
Number adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during the FY	1,260	1,248	1,166	1,186	1,224

Children in Foster Care on September 30, 2021 - N=9,227

Age as of September 30th	Years	Sex	Percent	Number
Mean	9.5	Male	54%	4,951
Median	10.0	Female	46%	4,276

Age as of September 30th	Percent	Number	Most Recent Placement Setting	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	6%	565	Pre-Adoptive Home	3%	282
1 Year	6%	573	Foster Family Home (Relative)	12%	1,090
2 Years	6%	551	Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	57%	5,253
3 Years	5%	467	Group Home	9%	796
4 Years	5%	458	Institution	7%	679
5 Years	4%	411	Supervised Independent Living	4%	380
6 Years	4%	404	Runaway	1%	135
7 Years	4%	353	Trial Home Visit	7%	604
8 Years	4%	326			
9 Years	4%	345			
10 Years	4%	367			
11 Years	4%	346			
12 Years	4%	395			
13 Years	5%	491			
14 Years	6%	551			
15 Years	7%	645			
16 Years	8%	739			
17 Years	8%	766			
18 Years	3%	266			
19 Years	1%	131			
20 Years	1%	76			

Case Plan Goal	Percent	Number
Reunify with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	68%	5,856
Live with Other Relative(s)	8%	718
Adoption	19%	1,651
Long Term Foster Care	4%	318
Emancipation	0%	0
Guardianship	1%	77
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	0%	5

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	0%	15	Mean	16.0
Asian	0%	25	Median	11.3
Black or African American	23%	2,113		
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	1		
Hispanic (of any race)	7%	595		
White	63%	5,717		
Unknown/Unable to Determine	1%	70		
Two or More Races	7%	594		
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	6%	524		
1 - 5 Months	25%	2,325		
6 - 11 Months	21%	1,957		
12 - 17 Months	14%	1,250		
18 - 23 Months	11%	996		
24 - 29 Months	9%	810		
30 - 35 Months	4%	394		
3 - 4 Years	9%	790		
5 Years or More	2%	181		

Children Entering Foster Care during FY 2021 - N=6,185

Age at Entry		Years	Race/Ethnicity		Percent	Number	
Mean		9.2	American Indian/Alaska Native		0%	11	
Median		10.0	Asian		0%	12	
			Black or African American		23%	1,371	
			Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		0%	4	
			Hispanic (of any race)		6%	388	
			White		63%	3,831	
			Unknown/Unable to Determine		1%	70	
			Two or More Races		6%	379	
			NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.				
Age at Entry		Percent	Number	Circumstances Associated with Child's Removal		Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year		14%	874	Drug Abuse (Parent)		36%	2,197
1 Year		5%	282	Neglect		35%	2,154
2 Years		4%	269	Child Behavior Problem		23%	1,451
3 Years		4%	247	Caretaker Inability To Cope		15%	911
4 Years		4%	247	Housing		12%	737
5 Years		4%	228	Abandonment		8%	513
6 Years		4%	255	Physical Abuse		7%	448
7 Years		3%	183	Parent Incarceration		7%	409
8 Years		3%	208	Sexual Abuse		4%	225
9 Years		3%	188	Drug Abuse (Child)		2%	154
10 Years		3%	194	Alcohol Abuse (Parent)		1%	121
11 Years		3%	208	Relinquishment		1%	82
12 Years		4%	242	Parent Death		1%	77
13 Years		5%	321	Child Disability		0%	21
14 Years		6%	377	Alcohol Abuse (Child)		0%	19
15 Years		8%	468				
16 Years		9%	546				
17 Years		7%	423				
18 Years		6%	358				
19 Years		1%	44				
20 Years		0%	23				

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=5,331

Age at Exit		Years	Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number	
Mean		9.9	American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	4	
Median		10.0	Asian	0%	4	
			Black or African American	22%	1,147	
			Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	10	
			Hispanic (of any race)	6%	308	
			White	66%	3,464	
			Unknown/Unable to Determine	0%	24	
			Two or More Races	6%	322	
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%	225	Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	47%	2,382
1 Year		6%	318	Living with Other Relative(s)	14%	696
2 Years		6%	335	Adoption	24%	1,222
3 Years		5%	283	Emancipation	7%	335
4 Years		5%	253	Guardianship	8%	401
5 Years		5%	267	Transfer to Another Agency	1%	32
6 Years		4%	228	Runaway	0%	9
7 Years		4%	208	Death of Child	0%	8
8 Years		4%	189			
9 Years		4%	212			
10 Years		4%	195			
11 Years		3%	175			
12 Years		3%	174			
13 Years		4%	214			
14 Years		4%	226			
15 Years		6%	298			
16 Years		8%	399			
17 Years		8%	444			
18 Years		11%	585			
19 Years		1%	44			
20 Years		0%	19			
Time in Care		Months				
Mean		16.9				
Median		13.5				
Time in Care		Percent	Number			
Less than 1 Month		8%	429			
1 - 5 Months		17%	882			
6 - 11 Months		20%	1,081			
12 - 17 Months		18%	957			
18 - 23 Months		12%	661			
24 - 29 Months		9%	481			
30 - 35 Months		6%	301			
3 - 4 Years		9%	466			
5 Years or More		1%	73			

Children Waiting to be Adopted³ on September 30, 2021 - N=1,872

Age as of September 30th			Years	Age at Entry into Foster Care			Years
Mean			9.3	Mean			6.7
Median			10.0	Median			7.0

Age as of September 30th	Percent	Number	Age at Entry into Foster Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	2%	42	Less than 1 Year	19%	356
1 Year	6%	121	1 Year	6%	103
2 Years	6%	116	2 Years	6%	103
3 Years	6%	109	3 Years	5%	102
4 Years	6%	118	4 Years	4%	81
5 Years	5%	90	5 Years	5%	91
6 Years	5%	85	6 Years	4%	70
7 Years	4%	77	7 Years	5%	101
8 Years	4%	73	8 Years	5%	98
9 Years	4%	78	9 Years	5%	92
10 Years	4%	84	10 Years	6%	117
11 Years	4%	84	11 Years	6%	111
12 Years	5%	93	12 Years	7%	127
13 Years	6%	119	13 Years	6%	107
14 Years	8%	150	14 Years	5%	102
15 Years	7%	131	15 Years	3%	59
16 Years	8%	154	16 Years	2%	37
17 Years	8%	148	17 Years	1%	15

Placement Type	Percent	Number	Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
Pre-Adoptive Home	15%	280	American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	3
Foster Family Home (Relative)	8%	155	Asian	0%	2
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	60%	1,116	Black or African American	20%	372
Group Home	9%	167	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	0
Institution	7%	126	Hispanic (of any race)	5%	96
Supervised Independent Living	0%	0	White	68%	1,259
Runaway	1%	12	Unknown/Unable to Determine	0%	9
Trial Home Visit	1%	16	Two or More Races	7%	123

Sex	Percent	Number
Male	55%	1,025
Female	45%	847

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

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=1,072), Time Elapsed since Termination of Parental Rights as of September 30, 2021			
Mean		31.6				
Median		28.1				
Time in Care		Percent	Number	Time Since TPR		Months
Less than 1 Month		1%	12	Mean		27.9
1 - 5 Months		4%	75	Median		10.0
6 - 11 Months		7%	137			
12 - 17 Months		12%	227			
18 - 23 Months		14%	264			
24 - 29 Months		17%	314			
30 - 35 Months		10%	184			
3 - 4 Years		27%	505			
5 Years or More		8%	154			

Children Adopted with Public Agency Involvement in FY 2021⁴ - N=1,224

Age at Adoption		Years	Time Elapsed from Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption			Months	
Mean		6.7	Mean			8.8	
Median		6.0	Median			4.4	
Age at Adoption		Percent	Number	Time Elapsed from Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption		Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year		2%	30	Less than 1 Month		2%	18
1 Year		12%	148	1 - 5 Months		63%	707
2 Years		12%	152	6 - 11 Months		17%	192
3 Years		8%	101	12 - 17 Months		8%	93
4 Years		7%	84	18 - 23 Months		5%	62
5 Years		7%	90	24 - 29 Months		1%	10
6 Years		5%	67	30 - 35 Months		1%	10
7 Years		5%	67	3 - 4 Years		2%	24
8 Years		4%	53	5 Years or More		1%	15
9 Years		5%	65				
10 Years		5%	59	Race/Ethnicity		Percent	Number
11 Years		4%	49	American Indian/Alaska Native		0%	0
12 Years		4%	54	Asian		0%	1
13 Years		4%	46	Black or African American		10%	128
14 Years		3%	41	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		0%	4
15 Years		3%	42	Hispanic (of any race)		7%	82
16 Years		4%	44	White		75%	918
17 Years		3%	32	Unknown/Unable to Determine		0%	5
18 Years		0%	0	Two or More Races		7%	86
19 Years		0%	0				
20 Years		0%	0	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	82%	964	Male	52%	638
Unmarried Couple	1%	9	Female	48%	586
Single Female	15%	179			
Single Male	2%	27			
Relationship of Adoptive Parents to Child Prior to Adoption	Percent	Number	Receive Adoption Subsidy	Percent	Number
Non-Relative	1%	17	Yes	94%	1,150
Foster Parent	85%	1,036	No	6%	74
Stepparent	0%	1			
Other Relative	14%	170			

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>