

AFCARS Adoption Data Research Brief Number 2

AGE OF CHILDREN AT ADOPTION AND TIME FROM TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS TO ADOPTION

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The purpose of the AFCARS Adoption Data Research Briefs is to make national and state level AFCARS data available to citizens and researchers interested in adoption, especially adoption of children with special needs.

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Background

When formal adoption began in the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century, infants were seldom placed. An infant separated from his mother was unable to survive without a wet nurse before the development of formula in the 1920s. Also, the adoption of an infant was risky because infant mortality was high. The children placed in adoption were between the ages of two and 14 (Brace 1892).

An example of a program that placed older children under early adoption statutes is the famous orphan trains. Between 1854 and 1929, as many as 250,000 children from New York and other eastern cities were sent by train to western farm communities. Having many children was an economic benefit in an agrarian economy. Adoptive placements were made to families who, without prior approval or investigation, took the children home from the local train station and put them to work beside their birth children or hired hands on the family farm.

The orphan train program was organized by the New York Children's Aid Society and directed by evangelical reformer Charles Loring Brace. Brace and his supporters believed that the lives of the children of indigent (mainly Catholic and Jewish) immigrants could be improved if the children were removed from the poverty and depravity of the city and raised by Anglo-Protestant farm families. Similar beliefs served as the foundation for the Indian Adoption Project, which moved Native American children from their tribes

and reservations to Anglo communities, and for the initial movement towards the acceptance of intercountry adoption after World War II.

After the 1920s and increasing towards the middle of the twentieth century, more infants became available for adoption and more prospective adoptive parents expressed a preference for them over older children. Many adoptive parents still prefer to adopt healthy infants. The 2000 federal census was the first to collect information on whether a child of the householder was adopted. The census found approximately 42,000 adopted children less than a year old living with householders in the United States, so at least this number of infants was adopted in the one-year period prior to the census survey.

When Elizabeth Cole—a pioneer in the field of special needs adoption—began working in adoption in 1965, an *older* waiting child was twelve to eighteen months. Toddlers were considered hard to place (Cole 1997). Today the *older* waiting child is aged nine to 16. In fact, the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-145) encourages states to focus on creating adoptions for waiting children aged nine and up.

Part of the change in the definition of *older child adoption* was the result of the *all children are adoptable* advocacy movement that changed attitudes about the adoptability of children with disabilities and other special needs. However, there have also been significant changes in the law and in the child welfare system that may explain part of the increase in age at adoption, especially for children who have been in foster care.

The 1961 amendment to the Social Security Act that established the federal foster care subsidy program did not contain incentives to create permanency for children, either through reunification with their birth parents or through adoption. The median length of stay in care was nearly four years, and many children experienced multiple placements. In the mid-1970s the child welfare community became concerned about *foster care drift*.

In response to the problem of foster care drift, Congress passed the 1980 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare

About AFCARS Data

A federal rule issued in December 1993 requires states to submit data on adoptions with state agency involvement (445CFR1355.40). Federal funding under the Social Security Act Title IV-E is contingent upon state's collection and submission of uniformly defined data. Beginning in 1998, states could be fiscally disciplined for lack of compliance. The data collection system is known as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, or AFCARS. AFCARS reporting rules require states to submit to the Children's Bureau case-level information on all children covered by the Title IV-B/E of the Social Security Act; that is, states are required to submit semi-annually information about children in foster care and information about children whose adoptions were finalized after any state agency involvement. The foster care and adoption data are tabulated annually by the Children's Bureau. The Children's Bureau publishes tabulations on its website and in an annual Child Welfare Outcomes Report.

The data used to produce the outcomes report form the basis for the public use version of the data used here, although the public use data may also include updates made by the states.

The AFCARS public use data files contain answers to 37 queries regarding each adoption finalized during the fiscal year.

The public use AFCARS data used here begin with fiscal year 1996, but many records for 1996 and 1997 contain missing data. The completeness of the data improves after 1997. The Children's Bureau puts little faith in the AFCARS data for years before 1998. However, AFCARS represents the only source of case-level data on adoptions with state agency involvement that is reasonably consistent in format across states and over time.

Although states are only required to submit data for adoptions that involve a state agency, the 1996 and 1997 AFCARS files include some observations of adoptions that were made without state involvement and were submitted voluntarily. The statistics presented here include only adoptions with state agency involvement.

Act (P.L. 96-272), which codified permanency planning as a standard of child welfare practice. Permanency planning is based upon the idea (now codified in part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the Preamble and in Article 20) that each child is entitled to be raised in a stable, loving family environment. In practice, permanency planning means that the child's case worker works toward a stated goal for the child who has been removed from her birth family. If possible, the first choice is for the child to be reunified with her birth parents. If reunification is not possible, the goal is often changed to adoption.

The median length of stay in foster care is one measure of the effectiveness of permanency planning. The 1999 Department of Health and Human Services *Child Welfare Outcomes Report* shows that the median length of stay for children exiting care in fiscal year 1999 was 10.3 months; that is, the majority of children who entered care are reunified with their birth parents within one year. The median length of stay of children who remained in foster care on the last day of fiscal year 1999 ranged from 9.9 months in Florida to 40.9 months in Illinois, with the median of the states at 16.5 months. Some of the variation between states reflects differences in the reliance of the states on kinship care. Kinship care reduces the pressure for quick decisions about reunification and reduces the necessity to petition the court for termination of parental rights.

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 required child welfare agencies to make "reasonable efforts" to preserve and reunify birth families; this was the interpretation in federal law of the best interests of the child standard. The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (PL 105-89) maintained the reasonable efforts requirement, but under ASFA the placement goal that is in the best interests of the child must be the goal that is in the "interests of the child's health and safety."¹ Further, ASFA encourages concurrent planning for adoption while the goal for a child may still be reunification. In other words, ASFA de-links the best interests of the child standard from a preference for reunification in social work practice and requires faster movement towards involuntary termination of parental rights and adoption (Lowry 2004).

In most private and international adoptions, termination of parental rights is voluntary. Birth parents willingly relinquish their parental rights by signing the appropriate consent forms. In most instances of older children, after the child welfare agency feels that reasonable efforts at reunification have been made but failed, or once state law under ASFA guidelines has been satisfied, the child welfare agency petitions the court to involuntarily terminate parental rights so the child can be adopted.

The parent has a right in law to the care, custody and companionship of his or her child. However, as the California decision *In re Jamon O* articulates, children have a right to be protected from neglect and to "have a placement that is stable and permanent." The interests of the child thus may diverge from the interests of the parent. The court then must determine if termination of parental rights is in the best interest of the child.

The standard of proof in termination cases (except those under the jurisdiction of the Indian Child Welfare Act) is the standard of clear and convincing evidence, rather than the lesser standard of a fair preponderance of the evidence. Grounds for terminating rights vary from state to state. Grounds include abuse, neglect, and alcohol – or drug – induced incapacity. Some states recognize physical or mental illness in the parent as sufficient grounds for terminating parental rights. Some states take into account the age of the child and his wishes, while others do not. Other factors that may be considered include the social activities of the parent; the strength of the emotional bond between the parent and the child; the ability of the parent to provide the child with food, shelter,

¹ 42 USC § 671(a)(15)(A)

clothing and medical care; and the established life of the child with respect to school, home, community and religious observance. In addition, some states consider the relationship the child has with foster parents, while others do not use that factor in determining termination. Felony conviction or incarceration of the parent is not automatic grounds for termination.

The ASFA exempts states from pursuing reasonable efforts and allows the child welfare agency to immediately petition for termination in cases in which a parent has “subjected the child to aggravated circumstances.” Aggravated circumstances include abandonment, sexual abuse, the involvement of a parent in the murder or manslaughter of another of his or her children, and the involuntary termination of the parent’s rights with respect to another child. Since ASFA, many states have changed their laws, adding specific circumstances under which the child welfare agency must petition for termination of parental rights. For example, if a child is abandoned, procedures to terminate parental rights must begin immediately in Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. If a parent has murdered another child, a petition for termination must be made immediately in Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, and Illinois.

The ASFA reduced the number of months a child can remain in foster care without a permanency hearing from 18 to 12 months. Moreover, with some exceptions, ASFA requires states to petition the court for termination of parental rights if a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. The *15 of 22* timeline applies even if adoptive parents have not yet been identified.

Federal regulation states that a compelling reason not to terminate parental rights must be based on the specific circumstances of the child and the family. Under ASFA, a compelling reason for not filing for termination after the *15 of 22* timeline has expired must be documented in the child’s case plan to continue payments of the federal share of Title IV-E foster care funds. Compelling reasons include: that adoption is not the appropriate permanency goal for the child; the child is an unaccompanied refugee minor; there are international legal obligations or compelling foreign policy reasons that preclude termination.

Despite existing incentives for child welfare agencies to complete adoptions, as the shorter timelines to termination of parental rights under ASFA are implemented by child welfare agencies, more children are likely to become *legal orphans*. During the late 1990s in California, the fraction of children in care whose parents’ rights had been terminated increased (Needell et al 2001; Guggenheim 1995). In December 2004, the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* reported that the average annual growth in terminations of parental rights from 1998 to 2004 was 1.5 times the average annual growth in adoptions.

The time between termination of parental rights and adoption is consistently and positively associated with the age of the child. In New York State each additional year in care resulted in a one-sixth reduction in the odds of adoption for a child (Finch, Franshel & Grundy 1986). In California, older children and children who experienced abuse or neglect before entering care waited longer for an adoptive family (Barth, Courtney, & Berry 1994). Several other studies confirm these findings (Avery 1998, Barth 1999, Brown 1988, Rosenthal 1993, Tataro 1993).

African American children, particularly, have long delays in adoptive placement. Richard Barth (1997) reports that the age and race of a child have large and independent effects on the odds of adoption, and that the race and age effects are about equally large. He finds that an African-American infant has the same likelihood of being adopted as a Caucasian three- to five-year-old. Brenda Smith (2003) studied the cohort of foster

children whose birth parents' rights were terminated in October 1997 and found that children who are older and African American had longer times between termination and adoption.

It is not clear what the combined effect of speedier termination and adoption promotion on the average time between termination of parental rights and adoption might be. If child welfare agencies successfully recruit adoptive families for the children who have been in care the longest, then the measured time from termination to adoption may rise before it falls.

Speed is imperative. Being adopted at an older age is the primary determinant of disruption and dissolution in adoption (Barth & Berry 1988, Festinger 2002, Goerge et al 1997; Groze 1996).

Despite the problems, studies report high rates of satisfaction among parents who adopted older children (Groze 1996, for example). Moreover, a survey of social workers in New Jersey finds that adoption professionals find great joy in "helping adolescents who haven't had one find a permanent family" (Cole 1997).

The following sections summarize the age of children at adoption and the time between termination of parental rights to adoption. The data cover all children known to be adopted with state agency involvement during fiscal years 1996-2003. The data are administrative data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (see box on page 2).

National Trends in Age at Adoption, 1996-2003

Between fiscal years 1996 and 2003 there was a slight increase in the national average of the age at adoption for children whose cases involved a state agency, as shown in table 1. The average age at adoption in 1996 was 6.53 years; the average age at adoption in 2002 and 2003 was 6.96 and 6.93 respectively.

Only 0.2 percent of the 320,000 MS. adoptions reported in the 1996-2003 AFCARS are missing age data. Nearly all of the missing observations are for 1996, when 3.2 percent of submitted records failed to include valid age data. The age data for 1998-2003 are quite complete.²

Figure 1 summarizes the national distribution of age at adoption for all reported adoptions with state agency involvement from fiscal years 1996 through 2003. Infants represent about two percent of children adopted. Children age one to three represent almost 18 percent of all children, children age three to five represent about 19.5 percent of all children. Just over 36 percent of children were age five to 10. Nineteen percent of children were age 10 to 15. Not quite four percent of adoptions were of teens over 15 years old.

Table 1. Age of Child at Finalization

	Valid Obs.	Mean (in years)	Std. Dev.
1996	12,483	6.53	4.32
1997	20,757	6.84	4.12
1998	36,650	6.89	3.94
1999	46,586	6.90	4.01
2000	50,600	6.91	4.07
2001	50,833	6.89	4.15
2002	52,546	6.96	4.25
2003	50,362	6.93	4.33
Average	40,102	6.89	4.15

Figure 2 and table 2 show the national distribution of age at adoption for each year separately. The most noticeable across years is the decline in the fraction of adoptions with agency involvement that are made for infants less than one year of age. While 6.5 percent of adoptions in fiscal year 1996 involved infants, the fraction dropped to two percent in 1998 and ranged between two percent and 2.5 percent in subsequent years. The absolute number of infant adoptions has changed little, however. The decline in the percent of infant adoptions is driven by increases in adoptions of

²Increase is statistically significant (p -value<.01).

older children. Increases have been logged in the percentage of adoptions of children age one to three and adoptions of children older than 10.³

Figure 1. Distribution of Age of Child at Finalization, All Adoptions with State Agency Involvement, 1996-2003

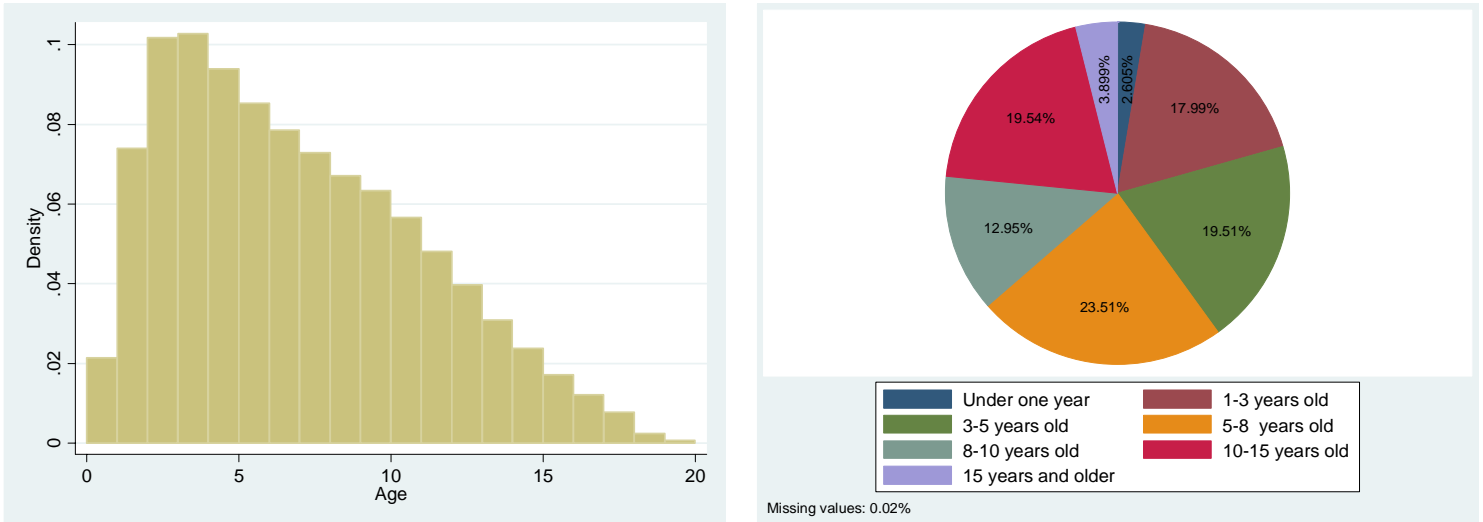


Figure 2. Distributions of Child's Age at Finalization by Year

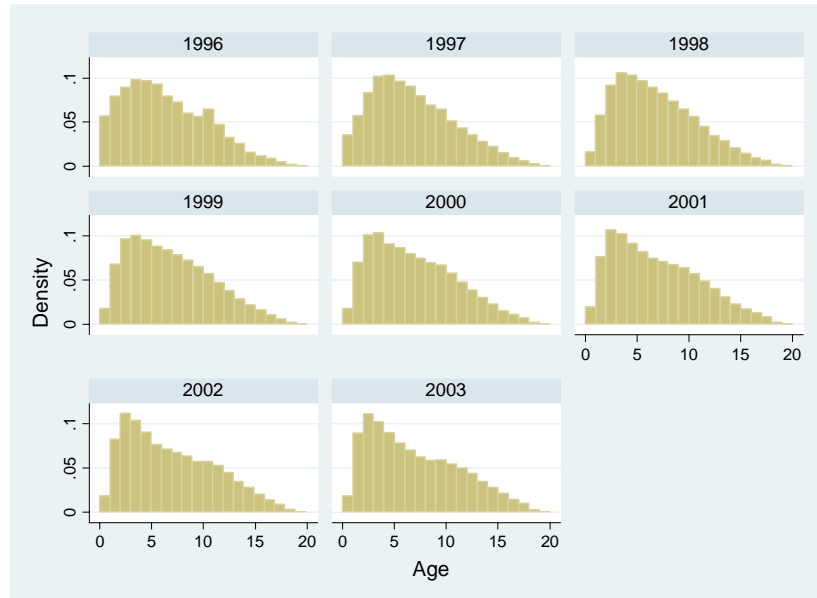


Figure 3 shows absolute number of adoptions increased for all age groups between 1998 and 2000. There was an initial drop between 1996 and 1998 in the number of infants placed, from about 1,000 to about 700, followed by a recovery to about 1,200 in 2002. Fewer than 3,000 toddlers age one to three were adopted in fiscal year 1996; over 10,000 toddlers were adopted in 2002 and 2003. The number of children adopted as preschoolers, at age three to five, increased from about 3,000 in 1996 to almost 10,000

³ The difference in proportions between 1996 and 2003 is statistically different for each age category (p -values<.05).

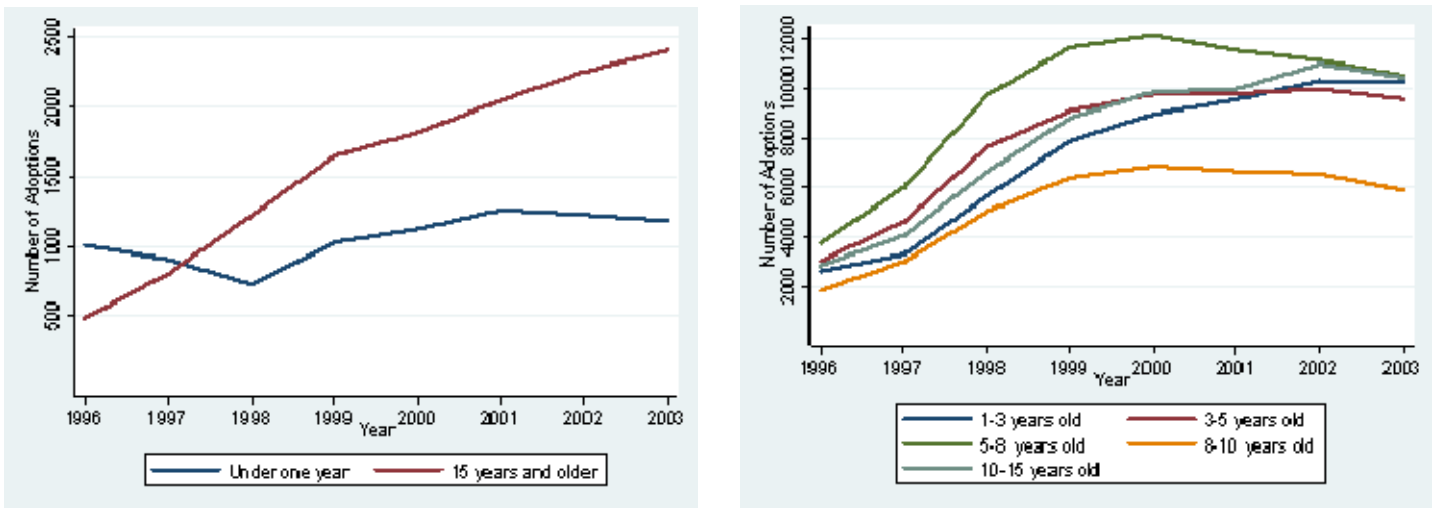
Table 2. Percent of Adoptions of Children by Age Category

Year	Under one year	1-3 years old	3-5 years old	5-8 years old	8-10 years old	10-15 years old	15 years and older
1996	6.5%	16.8%	19.5%	24.2%	11.7%	18.2%	3.2%
1997	4.0	14.5	20.4	26.5	13.2	17.8	3.6
1998	2.0	15.5	20.8	26.6	13.7	18.1	3.3
1999	2.2	16.9	19.6	25.1	13.8	18.9	3.5
2000	2.2	17.7	19.3	24.1	13.6	19.5	3.6
2001	2.5	18.8	19.3	22.7	13.1	19.6	4.0
2002	2.3	19.7	19.0	21.3	12.5	21.0	4.3
2003	2.4	20.5	19.0	20.9	11.7	20.8	4.8
Average	2.6%	18.0%	19.5%	23.5%	13.0%	19.5%	3.9%

in 2000, where it has leveled off. Just fewer than 4,000 young school-aged children, age five to eight, were adopted in 1996; more than 12,000 were adopted in 2000. The number of these young school age children adopted has declined to about 10,500 in 2003. The number of eight to 10 year olds adopted in 1996 was

less than 2,000; almost 7,000 children in this age group were adopted in 2000; just fewer than 6,000 were adopted in 2003. ⁴

Figure 3. Trends in Adoptions by Age Group



There have been large increases in the number adopted teens. About 3,000 children age 10 to 15 were adopted in 1996; adoptions of children in this age group more than tripled between 1996 and 2000. Adoptions of teens over 15 numbered fewer than 500 in 1996 and almost 2,500 in 2003.

Table 3. Proportion of Adopted Children Who Are Female

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Under one year	49.8%	47.8%	46.8%	47.4%	48.2%	47.5%	47.9%	49.9%
1-3 years old	50.9	47.7	48.7	49.2	48.7	49.3	48.2	49.6
3-5 years old	47.1	47.9	47.7	49.8	48.1	47.9	49.3	48.7
5-8 years old	48.9	49.9	49.1	49.1	49.8	49.0	49.0	49.4
8-10 years old	50.2	51.5	50.2	51.7	51.6	50.2	50.2	49.9
10-15 years old	51.8	51.1	51.4	51.5	52.2	51.8	51.5	50.1
15 years and	56.8	55.0	51.4	51.9	53.7	54.3	55.8	55.0
Average	49.9%	49.7%	49.4%	50.1%	50.1%	49.7%	49.8%	49.8%

Table 3 shows the proportion of adoptions of female children in each age category by year. A slightly higher proportion of boys and toddlers are adopted as infants;

this reflects of the male-to-female ratio in the population in general. Boys are adopted at about the same rate as girls until children reach age 10. Adoptions of children over age

⁴ Changes are statistically significant (p -values<.05).

10, however, are more likely to be of girls. In fact, 54 percent of adopted teens over age 15 are girls.⁵

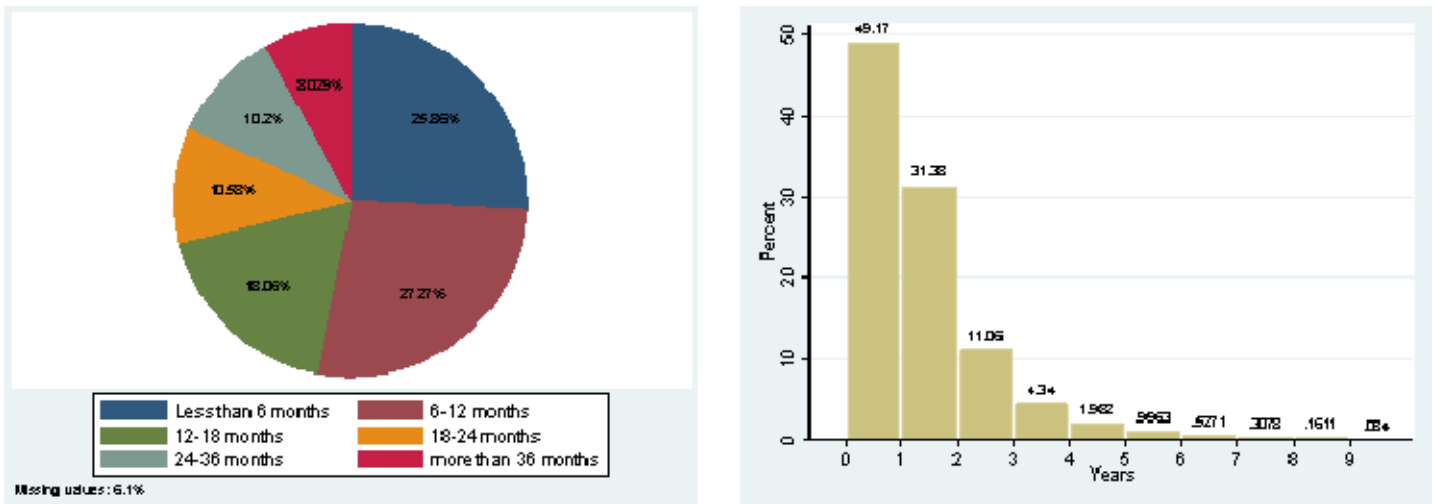
National Trends in Time from TPR to Finalization

The AFCARS records contain the date of finalization of adoption. The date of termination of the birth mother’s rights and the date of termination of the birth father’s rights are reported separately. The time between termination of parental rights and adoption is calculated using the later of the two recorded termination dates.

The AFCARS data on date of finalization and dates of termination of parental rights are not as complete as the data on age. Over 35 percent of adoption records (or 5,636 children) for fiscal year 1996 and over 22 percent (or 5,019 children) for 1997 do not include sufficient information to calculate the time between termination of parental rights and adoption, as shown in table 5. The completeness of the data improves markedly for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, for which about seven percent of records are incomplete. The data for 2000-2003 are nearly complete, with less than two percent of records (for fewer than 1,000 children) missing these benchmark dates.

About half of all adoptions completed from fiscal year 1996 through fiscal year 2003 were completed within one year of termination of parental rights (see figure 4), and 80 percent were completed within two years of termination. Very few adoptions were recorded for children who had been legal orphans for more than four years. Table 4 shows that between 1996 and 1997 there was an increase from 1.46 years to 1.51 years in the national average of time from termination of parental rights to finalization of adoption. This increase in the average is driven by a near-doubling of the number of adoptions of children who had been long-term legal orphans. In 1998 and thereafter, the average time between termination of parental rights and adoption hovered around 1.3 years.

Figure 4. Time from TPR to Finalization, All Adoptions with State Agency Involvement, 1996-2003



⁵ The proportion of girls who are over 15 is statistically significantly greater than the proportion of girls who are infants (p -value<.01).

Table 4. Average Time from TPR to Adoption in Years

Year	Mean	Std. Dev.
1996	1.46	5.54
1997	1.51	1.79
1998	1.42	1.51
1999	1.30	1.34
2000	1.28	1.48
2001	1.32	1.32
2002	1.32	1.36
2003	1.32	1.30
Average	1.34	1.72

Table 5. Percent and Number of Adoptions by Time from TPR to Adoption, Excluding Missing Values

Year	less than 6 months	6-12 months	12-18 months	18-24 months	24-36 months	more than 36 months
1996	30.2%	28.8%	17.2%	9.4%	8.6%	5.8%
1997	21.8	25.4	17.5	12.0	12.5	10.9
1998	23.0	27.7	18.2	10.5	10.8	9.9
1999	26.7	28.4	17.6	10.0	9.4	8.0
2000	26.1	27.9	19.1	10.9	9.3	6.8
2001	25.7	26.4	18.5	11.5	10.6	7.3
2002	26.9	26.8	17.8	10.0	10.7	7.9
2003	26.7	27.2	17.7	10.3	10.0	8.1
Average	25.9%	27.3%	18.1%	10.6%	10.2%	8.0%

One of the biggest accomplishments in adoption practice in the past decade has been the sustained increase in the number adoptions of children who have been legal orphans for two years or more. Table 5 shows that only about 1,500 adoptions of such long-term legal orphans were recorded in fiscal year 1996 while about 9,000 were recorded in 2002 and 2003.⁶

Table 6 shows the average months to adoption by age category. Infants under one year old are likely to be relinquished at birth and to be placed quickly in pre-adoptive homes. The mean months between termination of parental rights and finalization of adoption for infants therefore reflects required pre-adoption waiting times in the states. Toddlers age one to three who are adopted, however, wait almost nine months between termination and finalization. Preschoolers age three to five wait a little more than a year. Children of elementary school age wait about one and one-half years. Middle school and high school age students wait almost two years between termination and finalization of their adoptions. The standard deviation of time between termination and finalization increases steadily with age.⁷

Table 7 shows the distribution of time between termination and adoption for children in each age category. Most children and preschoolers who are adopted experience finalization within 36 months of termination of parental rights. Among five- to eight-year-olds who are adopted, finalization occurs within two years of termination in almost

Table 6. Wait

Age of Child	Mean Months from TPR	Std. Dev.
Under one year	5.14	14.89
1-3 years old	8.84	16.53
3-5 years old	13.03	15.27
5-8 years old	16.53	20.35
8-10 years old	19.16	21.90
10-15 years old	22.16	23.24
15 years and older	27.45	29.29
Average	16.05	20.66

Table 7. Age at Adoption by Time from TPR to Adoption, All Adoptions with State Agency Involvement, 1996-2003

Age of Child	Time Between TPR and Adoption					
	less than 6 months	6-12 months	12-18 months	18-24 months	24-36 months	more than 36 months
Under one year	70.8%	28.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
1-3 years old	40.6	38.3	15.5	4.3	1.1	0.1
3-5 years old	25.2	30.2	21.9	12.4	8.8	1.5
5-8 years old	21.1	25.4	20.0	13.0	13.0	7.4
8-10 years old	19.2	23.0	18.9	12.4	14.3	12.2
10-15 years old	18.4	20.9	16.9	11.8	14.6	17.4
15 years and older	20.5	17.8	13.6	9.7	13.2	25.3
Average	25.9%	27.3%	18.1%	10.6%	10.2%	8.0%

Table 8. Percent of Lifetime as Legal Orphan, at Time of Adoption

Year	Mean	Std. Dev.
1996	24.9%	27.6%
1997	26.9	25.8
1998	24.3	21.5
1999	22.7	19.4
2000	22.9	19.9
2001	23.8	20.2
2002	23.3	20.1
2003	23.7	23.6
Average	23.7%	21.4%

⁶ The change in proportions from 1996 to 2003 is statistically significant (p -value<.02).

⁷ The increase in the mean between each age group is statistically significant (p -value<.02).

80 percent of cases. Among eight to 10 year olds who are adopted, finalization occurs within two years in about 74 percent of cases. But for children who are adopted at ages over 10, the wait as a legal orphan is often longer. About 17 percent of young teens and 25 percent of older teens wait more than three years between termination of parental rights and finalization of their adoptions.

Table 8 considers the relationship between age at adoption and time between termination of parental rights and adoption in a different way. Table 8 shows the average percent of the child's lifetime he has spent as a legal orphan, as of the date of finalization. The average child who is adopted from foster care has spent less than 20 percent of his life as a legal orphan. Just over nine percent have been legal orphans for more than one-half of their lives, but note that many of these children are infants or toddlers whose mean stay in foster care is likely to be short.⁸

Age at Adoption State-by-State

Table 9 provides state-by-state information on missing AFCARS data on child's age at the time of adoption. If a state did not submit any adoption records to AFCARS, it is indicated with an N/A. If the state submitted adoption records to AFCARS, but some records were missing valid observations of the child's age at the time of adoption, the number of incomplete records and the percentage of the state records that is missing is indicated. The age information is mostly complete after fiscal year 1998. For fiscal year 1997, of the states that submitted adoption data, only Indiana was missing a significant portion of the information on age of child. For fiscal year 1996, a significant portion of data is missing for Indiana, Iowa, and Oregon. States not appearing in table 9 submitted complete data on age in all years.

Table 10 shows the average age at finalization for children adopted in each state during fiscal years 1996 through 2003. In 1996, 11 states (Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Arkansas, Maine, Mississippi, South Dakota, Oklahoma and Nebraska) the average child was older than seven at the time of finalization of the adoption. The average age at adoption was over seven in 21 states in fiscal year 2000 and in 23 states in fiscal year 2003. In four states (Hawaii, Montana, North Carolina, and Iowa) the average age at adoption was less than five in 1996. Only North Dakota had an average at adoption less than four in 2000, and no states had an average age at adoption of less than four in 2003.

The average age at adoption rose by 0.4 years (that is, three months) between 1996 and 2003. In 13 states (Maryland, Vermont, Ohio, Connecticut, North Dakota, Iowa, Louisiana, Kentucky, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, District of Columbia, and North Carolina) the average age at adoption rose by more than one year. In South Dakota, Utah, Kansas, and Nebraska the average age at adoption fell by one year or more.

⁸ These changes are not statistically significant at conventional levels of confidence.

Table 9. Missing Data on Age of Child at Finalization

	2003		2002		2001		2000		1999		1998		1997		1996	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alabama	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alaska	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Arizona	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
California	11	0.1	10	0.1	13	0.1	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Connecticut	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
Indiana	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18	100	22	8.6
Iowa	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.6	281	43
Kansas	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.2	0.0	0.0	7	1.7	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
Kentucky	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.5	2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Maine	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Massachusetts	0.0	0.0	2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Michigan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mississippi	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.6	1	1.0	0.0	0.0
Missouri	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nebraska	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nevada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
New Hampshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Mexico	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New York	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
North Carolina	1	0.1	7	0.5	6	0.5	1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	2.0
North Dakota	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
Ohio	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oregon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	211	45.1
Pennsylvania	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Rhode Island	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.5	0.0	0.0
South Carolina	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Virginia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washington	0.0	0.0	1	0.1	1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Virginia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wyoming	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
All States	12	0.0%	21	0.0%	20	0.0%	3	0.0%	1	0.0%	13	0.0%	25	0.1%	517	3.2%

Table 10. Average Age of Child at Finalization (in Years)

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
Alabama	6.96	6.98	6.73	6.75	6.46	6.48	N/A	N/A
Alaska	7.01	6.58	6.43	6.93	5.79	6.82	N/A	N/A
Arizona	6.27	6.55	6.81	6.94	6.98	7.34	6.50	6.50
Arkansas	6.88	7.70	7.58	7.97	7.48	5.45	7.74	7.74
California	6.35	6.43	6.33	5.98	5.31	6.23	6.47	6.47
Colorado	6.13	6.70	6.33	6.48	6.58	6.60	5.71	5.71
Connecticut	6.79	6.97	6.23	6.86	6.74	7.16	5.41	N/A
Delaware	5.87	7.72	6.20	5.86	5.20	7.09	6.96	5.61
DC	8.96	8.90	8.11	7.70	7.09	6.86	6.74	6.27
Florida	6.70	6.52	6.44	6.56	6.81	6.74	7.26	7.21
Georgia	7.04	7.18	7.07	7.41	6.72	5.99	7.00	6.54
Hawaii	5.64	5.46	5.66	5.46	5.40	5.49	5.75	3.76
Idaho	6.91	6.60	6.21	5.80	5.89	7.49	6.76	6.85
Illinois	7.30	7.52	7.50	7.47	7.74	7.39	7.40	7.46
Indiana	7.86	7.81	7.42	7.74	7.28	6.76	N/A	7.57
Iowa	6.55	6.81	7.30	7.00	6.97	7.94	6.81	4.90
Kansas	7.06	7.32	7.71	7.96	7.82	6.76	8.23	N/A
Kentucky	8.07	7.92	7.78	6.98	7.25	7.27	7.29	6.22
Louisiana	6.98	7.35	7.74	7.77	7.34	8.13	6.83	5.31
Maine	7.32	7.15	6.90	6.82	7.10	6.62	7.96	8.01
Maryland	7.70	7.26	7.29	7.18	7.12	6.66	6.58	6.63
Massachusetts	6.42	6.58	6.66	6.48	6.74	6.81	6.51	6.53
Michigan	7.27	7.17	7.07	7.06	6.77	7.35	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	6.03	6.69	6.61	7.04	6.96	8.74	7.02	5.97
Mississippi	8.14	8.23	7.61	7.81	7.74	7.11	8.43	8.91
Missouri	7.28	7.07	6.85	7.15	7.10	7.28	N/A	N/A
Montana	6.78	7.05	7.33	6.52	6.98	6.76	6.43	4.19
Nebraska	6.74	6.73	7.31	7.12	7.08	6.07	10.11	13.67
Nevada	6.19	6.59	5.77	5.60	5.98	7.60	3.50	N/A
New	7.43	7.99	6.69	6.69	6.28	8.36	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	5.92	6.15	6.01	6.07	5.87	6.82	6.56	6.48
New Mexico	7.41	7.05	7.44	6.72	7.65	3.31	6.88	6.94
New York	8.58	8.45	8.32	8.53	8.79	6.28	8.23	N/A
North	6.98	6.95	6.86	6.73	6.65	7.04	6.11	4.21
North Dakota	6.30	4.23	5.77	3.38	3.16	6.29	4.73	N/A
Ohio	7.09	7.03	6.54	6.25	6.08	6.99	6.12	5.85
Oklahoma	6.85	7.10	7.47	7.46	7.39	6.03	7.78	7.20
Oregon	6.59	6.52	6.78	6.61	6.64	6.52	6.46	5.80
Pennsylvania	7.59	7.45	7.41	7.43	7.10	7.20	7.03	7.24
Puerto Rico	5.87	6.97	7.00	6.28	6.49	6.60	6.62	6.28
Rhode Island	6.36	6.65	6.29	6.31	6.90	6.96	6.00	5.57
South	6.65	6.98	7.23	6.86	6.89	6.10	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	6.56	6.13	6.06	5.98	6.86	6.13	8.97	9.01
Tennessee	8.57	8.24	7.99	7.93	7.28	6.58	7.02	7.73
Texas	5.75	5.65	5.76	5.98	6.37	7.38	6.48	5.08
Utah	5.07	5.42	5.39	5.68	6.19	5.91	6.60	6.30
Vermont	7.94	6.84	7.39	6.97	7.01	7.07	7.68	6.81
Virginia	7.56	7.61	7.50	7.77	6.75	7.27	N/A	N/A
Washington	5.61	5.57	5.85	5.96	5.67	7.10	6.11	5.95
West Virginia	7.30	7.50	7.60	7.64	7.06	6.89	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	7.22	6.80	6.37	6.98	7.08	6.48	6.26	6.39
Wyoming	7.05	6.65	8.10	7.41	7.11	6.82	N/A	N/A
All States	6.93	6.96	6.89	6.91	6.90	7.34	6.84	6.53

Table 11 shows, by age group, the number and proportion of children adopted in each state in each fiscal year. Of states reporting age data in 1996, eight (Puerto Rico, Kentucky, Hawaii, Minnesota, Delaware, Iowa, North Carolina, Montana) had 30 percent or more of adoptions finalized before age three. Four states (Maine, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, and Indiana) had less than 10 percent of adoptions finalized before age three. In 2000, New Hampshire and New York had less than 10 percent finalized before age three, while Idaho and North Dakota finalized one third or more by age three and Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah finalized almost one third that early. In 2003, DC and New York reported less than 10 percent of adoptions finalized before age three, while Texas, Hawaii, North Dakota, and Utah had more than one third finalized before age three.

In 1996, the average state reported that about 20 percent of adoption finalizations were for preschoolers age 3 to 5. Texas reported that two thirds of its finalizations were for preschoolers. Louisiana and Hawaii reported that one third of finalizations were for preschoolers. Delaware and Minnesota had the smallest proportion of finalizations for this age group. In 2003, only South Carolina, New Jersey and South Dakota reported more than 25 percent of finalizations for preschoolers. Only North Dakota, DC, New Mexico, and West Virginia reported that less than 15 percent of finalizations were for preschoolers.

Nationally in 1996, almost 36 percent of adoptions from foster care were finalized when the child was between the ages of five and 10. Of states reporting age data in 1996, 16 states reported that 40 percent or more of adoption finalizations were for children in this age group. Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and New Mexico reported more than half of finalizations were for children in this age group. Nebraska, Hawaii, California and Montana reported that less than 25 percent of finalizations were for children in this age group. In 2000, 18 states reported that 40 percent or more of finalizations were for children age 5 to 10. Only New Hampshire reported more than half for this age group. Only North Dakota reported less than 25 percent in this age group. In 2003, North Dakota and Idaho reported the smallest proportion of adoptions for 5-to-10 year olds, while only DC and New Hampshire reported more than 40 percent of finalizations in this age group.

Of the states reporting age data in 1996, only California, South Dakota and Mississippi, and Nebraska completed more than 30 percent of adoptions for children over age 10. (Note that there was only one reported adoption in Nebraska in 1996.) Less than 10 percent of finalizations in 1996 were for children over 10 in Colorado, Montana, and North Carolina. There were no adoptions of children over 10 in Hawaii, Louisiana, or Texas in 1996. Between 1996 and 2000, the nationally reported proportion of finalizations for children over 10 rose from 21.4 percent to 23.1 percent. In 2000, all states reported some adoptions of children over 10. The smallest proportions (less than 15 percent) of adoptions in this age group were in North Dakota, Hawaii, Delaware, Puerto Rico, Nevada, Washington, California, and New Hampshire. Kansas, Arkansas, and New York reported more than 30 percent of finalization for children over 10 in 2000. By 2003, the national average of adoptions for older children had risen an additional two percentage points, to 25.6 percent. Twelve states reported that more than 30 percent of finalizations were for children in this group. Only two states (Utah and Puerto Rico) reported that less than 15 percent of finalizations were for older children.

The rate of growth of finalizations of adoption for children over 10 years old was uneven. Thirteen states increased the percentage of adoptions for older children by more than 10 percentage points. This group of states includes some states with large foster care populations, such as North Carolina, Texas, Maryland, and Ohio. Fourteen states experienced a decline in the percentage of finalizations for older children. This group of states includes California and Florida.

**Table 11. Distribution of Age of Child at Finalization
Children Under Three Years Old**

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	20.4%	17.7%	18.1%	14.8%	22.9%	19.1%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	19.2	19.6	21.2	19.8	34.3	20.0	N/A	N/A
Arizona	29.6	25.9	22.1	18.9	16.4	N/A	17.6	12.4
Arkansas	24.4	19.2	17.7	19.4	18.2	16.3	23.4	14.3
California	26.9	25.1	24.7	25.0	31.8	25.9	37.5	27.2
Colorado	31.4	25.5	28.0	25.3	26.8	26.4	23.1	20.6
Connecticut	21.6	15.1	20.9	13.2	17.6	16.6	45.6	N/A
Delaware	31.7	16.5	23.9	27.2	24.2	11.3	31.8	41.7
DC	5.8	5.2	7.4	11.9	10.8	12.2	13.7	17.6
Florida	21.8	26.0	24.8	25.2	20.7	19.3	16.2	16.9
Georgia	22.6	20.9	20.8	17.3	20.2	20.0	16.9	19.8
Hawaii	36.8	37.7	33.9	33.2	29.2	24.2	23.3	38.5
Idaho	26.1	25.4	31.8	39.3	29.0	28.6	27.0	18.2
Illinois	16.9	15.6	12.7	11.0	9.0	10.1	10.3	12.4
Indiana	18.8	16.5	17.1	13.7	15.6	13.7	N/A	9.8
Iowa	27.4	22.6	20.7	18.5	18.5	18.5	9.9	44.4
Kansas	20.3	19.1	15.2	18.4	16.4	11.9	12.7	N/A
Kentucky	16.7	15.9	13.6	19.2	16.4	14.0	26.1	38.2
Louisiana	18.7	18.9	11.9	13.2	13.2	13.1	16.9	13.3
Maine	18.8	22.8	20.6	19.2	15.3	10.7	12.6	3.8
Maryland	18.4	15.0	15.2	13.8	15.2	16.4	14.2	16.5
Massachusetts	25.0	24.9	21.1	18.9	16.7	15.6	16.9	16.9
Michigan	20.9	21.4	20.8	21.7	21.5	20.0	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	31.2	26.5	23.3	19.4	17.2	14.7	15.3	40.8
Mississippi	12.6	15.9	14.3	13.2	10.1	7.7	7.8	5.6
Missouri	24.6	23.7	25.6	22.0	21.6	18.3	N/A	N/A
Montana	23.2	19.8	22.2	27.5	22.5	17.4	22.3	51.5
Nebraska	20.1	18.8	18.1	18.0	14.0	N/A	3.2	0.0
Nevada	27.0	25.7	32.5	32.9	25.2	N/A	66.7	N/A
New Hampshire	13.0	11.4	12.6	8.3	16.1	19.6	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	24.5	23.1	24.5	23.3	24.0	21.0	18.1	17.3
New Mexico	26.4	22.9	17.1	17.9	16.3	19.9	17.7	13.2
New York	8.9	9.5	9.9	9.5	7.3	7.1	7.4	N/A
North Carolina	26.1	25.6	24.0	24.0	23.4	21.9	35.3	49.0
North Dakota	40.0	54.7	44.1	63.8	64.0	65.8	48.4	N/A
Ohio	27.9	25.3	27.1	29.4	30.6	25.2	25.5	28.7
Oklahoma	21.2	22.4	18.1	18.3	16.0	18.2	11.5	16.0
Oregon	17.6	18.8	20.0	19.2	15.8	18.2	18.8	22.2
Pennsylvania	16.8	18.3	20.2	16.1	15.5	15.8	11.9	7.5
Puerto Rico	28.4	26.2	18.3	27.7	21.8	28.5	27.4	31.3
Rhode Island	32.2	26.6	27.3	27.7	21.2	28.4	26.2	27.0
South Carolina	21.1	19.5	18.8	19.6	17.5	16.1	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	15.3	25.5	21.6	28.7	21.4	30.9	3.9	19.2
Tennessee	11.8	12.0	15.6	12.1	15.7	19.9	13.7	13.5
Texas	34.5	36.7	33.7	31.0	25.9	25.7	22.2	0.0
Utah	40.5	36.7	38.1	33.0	26.6	27.2	27.0	26.5
Vermont	16.2	30.1	18.1	18.9	18.0	17.8	10.7	16.9
Virginia	15.8	14.4	16.2	12.9	15.9	11.5	N/A	N/A
Washington	32.0	32.2	29.6	27.2	28.1	22.7	19.6	24.4
West Virginia	23.9	15.5	17.1	13.6	16.7	14.7	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	21.1	23.2	24.5	18.9	16.7	13.8	29.8	26.1
Wyoming	21.4	30.8	6.5	14.8	20.0	15.6	N/A	N/A
All States	22.8%	22.0%	21.3%	19.9%	19.1%	17.4%	18.5%	23.3%

**Table 11. Distribution of Age of Child at Finalization
Children between Age 3 and 5**

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	19.8%	24.9%	22.3%	24.8%	20.3%	23.5%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	20.7	24.6	21.2	16.8	14.6	16.8	N/A	N/A
Arizona	17.5	17.4	19.8	18.4	19.6	N/A	27.3	27.5
Arkansas	21.3	17.2	17.1	18.8	18.6	16.7	17.2	17.5
California	20.3	21.0	21.2	24.9	26.5	29.1	25.6	18.1
Colorado	19.8	19.1	19.5	20.6	16.6	17.2	26.8	28.8
Connecticut	20.5	22.9	25.9	25.6	20.8	19.6	9.6	N/A
Delaware	22.8	18.1	20.5	22.3	30.3	17.7	22.7	8.3
DC	9.6	15.1	13.0	14.4	21.7	21.6	25.3	23.5
Florida	23.3	20.6	20.8	17.3	20.1	19.3	20.8	19.7
Georgia	19.2	17.2	17.8	15.7	18.7	19.6	21.1	20.7
Hawaii	19.8	16.4	17.7	17.1	24.2	23.9	25.6	38.5
Idaho	19.6	19.5	15.9	14.3	14.9	7.1	21.6	29.1
Illinois	20.0	20.5	20.8	20.9	19.0	21.2	22.2	19.5
Indiana	17.1	17.5	18.2	18.0	19.8	17.5	N/A	19.6
Iowa	19.6	21.3	18.5	20.7	18.2	20.6	26.7	15.9
Kansas	23.4	20.4	18.5	14.1	15.9	19.2	14.3	N/A
Kentucky	16.5	14.7	16.8	20.8	19.2	22.2	16.6	13.4
Louisiana	18.7	17.0	17.7	13.4	16.6	19.0	11.9	33.3
Maine	18.3	17.0	20.1	17.3	15.3	18.9	10.5	22.7
Maryland	19.1	19.3	20.1	15.8	16.6	20.6	23.9	18.0
Massachusetts	20.2	18.5	20.2	21.0	20.4	21.9	21.1	21.7
Michigan	16.8	17.5	17.2	16.1	19.1	17.9	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	18.2	15.7	20.6	15.0	17.4	14.4	17.9	12.3
Mississippi	18.7	14.5	18.1	12.8	16.9	14.8	8.7	13.0
Missouri	15.5	16.9	17.7	14.8	16.2	18.9	N/A	N/A
Montana	18.3	16.2	16.7	18.6	17.6	20.8	20.3	15.2
Nebraska	20.4	21.1	17.5	16.7	21.9	N/A	4.8	0.0
Nevada	23.3	17.8	23.1	22.1	24.4	N/A	7.8	N/A
New Hampshire	19.1	14.9	22.1	22.9	27.4	23.5	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	26.8	25.3	26.5	25.2	27.3	24.8	23.1	24.4
New Mexico	12.7	17.1	15.2	21.6	13.9	14.8	17.7	18.9
New York	16.9	17.5	17.7	15.2	14.1	16.9	16.8	N/A
North Carolina	15.8	17.9	18.7	17.1	18.6	18.4	17.6	18.9
North Dakota	9.2	12.4	8.3	7.6	11.5	11.7	6.5	N/A
Ohio	15.0	16.9	18.3	17.9	17.7	22.4	22.7	22.3
Oklahoma	21.0	17.3	16.3	16.8	17.3	19.2	17.5	17.7
Oregon	24.7	24.6	20.4	23.7	20.9	24.7	20.4	25.7
Pennsylvania	18.0	17.2	15.7	16.9	20.3	20.1	20.6	20.4
Puerto Rico	19.0	16.2	23.4	16.9	17.5	21.4	19.2	19.2
Rhode Island	19.3	17.6	19.5	20.0	16.8	16.7	18.9	26.7
South Carolina	25.4	20.4	17.7	19.1	19.7	18.7	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	29.9	21.4	23.7	20.2	15.5	9.1	11.5	15.4
Tennessee	15.0	16.4	14.2	18.3	21.2	22.3	21.3	19.9
Texas	18.7	18.1	17.6	18.8	18.7	20.5	22.2	66.7
Utah	17.7	16.8	16.3	17.8	17.9	15.3	10.7	19.1
Vermont	15.6	12.4	17.2	22.9	16.6	22.0	23.5	22.5
Virginia	17.9	18.2	16.6	15.0	23.3	15.7	N/A	N/A
Washington	22.5	21.8	20.9	20.9	21.9	25.7	26.4	24.9
West Virginia	14.9	20.8	16.9	14.5	19.9	21.8	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	17.0	16.6	19.5	18.3	19.3	22.2	13.5	15.6
Wyoming	16.1	9.6	15.2	22.9	20.0	28.1	N/A	N/A
All States	19.0%	19.0%	19.3%	19.3%	19.6%	20.8%	20.4%	19.5%

**Table 11. Distribution of Age of Child at Finalization
Children between Age 5 and 10**

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	35.6%	33.7%	37.4%	39.1%	37.2%	37.4%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	37.0	33.9	39.2	38.6	38.7	42.1	N/A	N/A
Arizona	32.9	33.8	34.8	39.3	43.1	N/A	45.4	45.2
Arkansas	27.5	33.3	33.7	28.3	34.3	43.4	34.4	41.3
California	32.4	33.2	35.1	34.7	30.3	34.3	29.0	23.2
Colorado	27.2	29.8	30.5	32.4	35.2	39.8	37.4	40.6
Connecticut	34.5	40.0	35.8	40.9	44.4	47.2	24.0	N/A
Delaware	27.7	35.3	37.6	36.9	42.4	48.4	22.7	31.9
DC	45.4	40.1	52.6	47.6	48.2	43.9	43.2	41.2
Florida	31.6	31.0	34.5	36.4	36.3	39.2	37.3	38.5
Georgia	31.6	35.7	36.6	40.7	40.3	40.1	38.8	39.7
Hawaii	25.5	29.8	32.3	37.5	35.2	36.5	39.2	23.1
Idaho	24.6	33.9	28.0	29.3	43.0	57.1	18.9	27.3
Illinois	35.4	35.1	39.3	42.2	44.8	43.4	43.1	42.3
Indiana	29.4	33.8	37.0	39.3	40.0	45.5	N/A	43.8
Iowa	28.9	30.5	31.3	36.9	40.7	41.1	44.8	25.8
Kansas	28.6	32.1	38.1	34.6	36.2	37.9	38.1	N/A
Kentucky	30.6	37.2	41.5	37.5	38.9	45.9	32.9	26.4
Louisiana	39.2	38.8	43.2	44.1	46.4	45.6	49.1	53.3
Maine	34.6	33.4	37.4	42.1	47.5	38.5	49.5	44.7
Maryland	30.5	40.3	40.4	49.2	46.5	44.2	44.5	47.9
Massachusetts	34.8	34.9	37.1	42.5	43.7	44.5	46.0	43.8
Michigan	33.8	32.8	36.1	36.7	37.3	41.5	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	30.9	33.9	33.5	41.0	43.0	48.5	48.2	27.7
Mississippi	34.6	34.4	38.7	45.8	46.4	41.4	48.5	46.3
Missouri	29.9	32.6	32.2	37.2	37.2	38.8	N/A	N/A
Montana	36.2	40.5	32.4	31.4	35.3	38.3	35.8	24.2
Nebraska	38.0	39.6	38.7	41.7	45.9	N/A	42.7	0.0
Nevada	30.7	34.8	26.8	30.7	31.7	N/A	14.7	N/A
New Hampshire	45.8	36.8	48.4	53.1	45.2	35.3	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	32.9	34.0	32.8	34.9	33.9	38.6	40.6	41.4
New Mexico	29.1	33.1	42.0	41.8	43.4	37.8	43.5	50.9
New York	38.0	37.0	37.4	38.5	40.5	43.6	44.6	N/A
North Carolina	29.6	28.8	32.5	35.5	35.4	36.3	28.7	25.2
North Dakota	20.0	19.7	26.2	21.9	18.0	13.5	25.8	N/A
Ohio	27.2	29.8	31.7	32.0	32.7	33.4	34.2	33.3
Oklahoma	33.8	35.4	37.8	36.2	40.7	39.0	40.2	42.5
Oregon	38.3	37.0	39.4	38.4	46.4	41.5	45.4	38.9
Pennsylvania	34.8	35.2	35.2	40.2	41.3	42.5	48.7	51.7
Puerto Rico	38.8	31.6	37.7	41.1	44.5	34.2	29.3	28.3
Rhode Island	26.5	33.6	31.1	32.7	41.4	37.4	39.3	32.3
South Carolina	30.4	34.6	37.5	39.4	41.7	41.5	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	35.4	35.9	42.3	31.9	42.9	38.2	46.1	30.8
Tennessee	36.0	36.1	36.5	40.4	37.4	32.9	42.1	37.2
Texas	28.7	28.3	32.0	32.1	34.9	36.8	22.2	33.3
Utah	28.3	31.5	30.4	33.0	37.9	38.9	40.2	34.7
Vermont	37.1	28.1	39.7	36.9	43.2	42.4	39.3	41.0
Virginia	35.3	38.4	39.4	42.9	40.5	50.6	N/A	N/A
Washington	30.1	32.2	35.2	36.7	37.7	38.1	40.8	34.3
West Virginia	32.3	33.5	38.7	46.0	40.7	41.2	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	34.0	36.7	36.6	38.9	41.1	39.0	35.5	37.9
Wyoming	37.5	38.5	47.8	37.7	33.3	31.2	N/A	N/A
All States	32.6%	33.7%	35.8%	37.6%	38.8%	40.3%	39.7%	35.8%

Table 11. Distribution of Age of Child at Finalization
Children Older than 10 Years Old

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	24.3%	23.7%	22.3%	21.3%	19.6%	20.0%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	23.1	21.9	18.4	24.8	12.4	21.1	N/A	N/A
Arizona	20.0	22.9	23.4	23.4	20.9	N/A	9.7	14.9
Arkansas	26.8	30.3	31.5	33.5	28.9	23.6	25.0	27.0
California	20.4	20.7	19.0	15.4	11.4	10.7	7.9	31.4
Colorado	21.6	25.6	22.0	21.7	21.5	16.5	12.7	10.0
Connecticut	23.4	22.0	17.3	20.2	17.1	16.6	20.8	N/A
Delaware	17.8	30.1	17.9	13.6	3.0	22.6	22.7	18.1
DC	39.2	39.7	27.0	26.0	19.3	22.3	17.9	17.6
Florida	23.4	22.4	19.9	21.1	22.9	22.1	25.7	24.8
Georgia	26.6	26.2	24.8	26.3	20.8	20.3	23.1	19.8
Hawaii	17.9	16.1	16.1	12.1	11.4	15.3	11.9	0.0
Idaho	29.7	21.2	24.2	17.1	13.1	7.1	32.4	25.4
Illinois	27.8	28.8	27.3	25.9	27.2	25.4	24.4	25.7
Indiana	34.7	32.2	27.7	29.0	24.6	23.3	N/A	26.8
Iowa	24.2	25.6	29.5	23.9	22.6	19.8	18.6	14.0
Kansas	27.7	28.4	28.3	32.9	31.4	31.1	34.9	N/A
Kentucky	36.3	32.2	28.1	22.5	25.6	17.9	24.3	22.0
Louisiana	23.3	25.3	27.2	29.2	23.9	22.4	22.0	0.0
Maine	28.2	26.7	22.0	21.4	21.8	32.0	27.4	28.8
Maryland	32.0	25.4	24.3	21.2	21.8	18.9	17.4	17.5
Massachusetts	20.1	21.7	21.6	17.5	19.2	18.0	16.0	17.6
Michigan	28.4	28.3	25.9	25.5	22.2	20.6	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	19.7	24.0	22.6	24.6	22.4	22.4	18.6	19.1
Mississippi	34.1	35.2	28.9	28.1	26.6	36.1	35.0	35.2
Missouri	29.9	26.8	24.5	26.0	25.0	24.1	N/A	N/A
Montana	22.3	23.5	28.7	22.5	24.6	23.5	21.6	9.1
Nebraska	21.5	20.4	25.7	23.7	18.3	N/A	49.2	100
Nevada	18.9	21.7	17.7	14.3	18.7	N/A	10.8	N/A
New	22.1	36.8	16.8	15.6	11.3	21.6	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	15.7	17.6	16.2	16.6	14.8	15.6	18.2	16.9
New Mexico	31.8	26.9	25.8	18.7	26.4	27.6	21.0	17.0
New York	36.3	36.0	35.0	36.8	38.0	32.4	31.3	N/A
North Carolina	28.4	27.7	24.8	23.4	22.7	23.5	18.4	7.0
North Dakota	30.8	13.1	21.4	6.7	6.5	9.0	19.4	N/A
Ohio	29.9	27.9	22.8	20.6	19.0	19.0	17.6	15.8
Oklahoma	24.1	24.9	27.8	28.7	25.9	23.6	30.8	23.8
Oregon	19.4	19.6	20.3	18.6	16.9	15.6	15.4	13.2
Pennsylvania	30.3	29.2	28.8	26.9	22.8	21.6	18.8	20.4
Puerto Rico	13.8	26.0	20.6	14.3	16.3	16.0	24.0	21.2
Rhode Island	22.0	22.3	22.1	19.6	20.6	17.6	15.5	14.1
South Carolina	23.2	25.6	26.0	22.0	21.1	23.7	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	19.4	17.2	12.4	19.1	20.2	21.8	38.5	34.6
Tennessee	37.2	35.5	33.6	29.2	25.6	24.9	22.8	29.4
Texas	18.1	16.9	16.7	18.1	20.4	17.0	33.3	0.0
Utah	13.5	15.0	15.2	16.2	17.6	18.6	22.0	19.7
Vermont	31.1	29.4	25.0	21.3	22.3	17.8	26.5	19.6
Virginia	31.0	29.0	27.9	29.2	20.2	22.1	N/A	N/A
Washington	15.4	13.8	14.4	15.2	12.3	13.4	13.1	16.4
West Virginia	28.9	30.2	27.4	25.9	22.8	22.3	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	27.9	23.4	19.4	23.9	22.9	24.9	21.2	20.4
Wyoming	25.0	21.1	30.4	24.6	26.7	25.0	N/A	N/A
All States	25.6	25.2	23.6	23.1	22.5	21.4	21.4	21.4

Time from Termination to Finalization State-by-State

Table 12 gives a state-by-state summary of the completeness of the AFCARS data on time between termination of parental rights and finalization of adoption. For fiscal year 1996, eight of the states that submitted AFCARS adoption data omitted one or more of the elements needed to calculate the time adopted children spent as legal orphans for at least 90 percent of adoption cases. Five additional states omitted one or more of the elements for between 50 and 90 percent of cases. All told, only fourteen states submitted enough information to calculate time between termination and finalization for 90 percent or more of adoption cases. Maine and Ohio still had very incomplete records for fiscal year 1998; Ohio did not submit substantially complete information on these elements until fiscal year 2000. Other states with inconsistently complete data, especially for fiscal years prior to 2001, include Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Virginia.

Among states reporting time from termination of parental rights to finalization of adoption in 1996, four (Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, and Delaware) averaged over two years' wait; see table 13. In 2000, only Minnesota and Kentucky took that long, and in 2003, only Maine did. Predictably, the shortest waits between TPR and finalization occurred in the states that placed the youngest children. The shortest average wait times increased slightly from 1996 to 2003, from about three months to about six months.

Table 14 illustrates the large variations in time between termination and finalization. Variations are large between states and within states. In 1996, seven states (Texas, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, Georgia, Tennessee, and Washington) reported that less than one third of finalizations occurred within one year of termination. On the other hand, four states (Kentucky, Puerto Rico, Idaho, and Louisiana) reported that 90 percent or more of finalizations occurred within one year of termination. By 2000, only Wisconsin and Wyoming reported that more than 80 percent of finalizations occurred within one year of termination, while four states reported less than one third of finalizations occurred this quickly. In 2003, Wyoming, Utah, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin 80 percent of finalizations occurred within one year of termination.

Across all states, the percentage of finalizations that occurred within one year of termination grew just over three percent between 1998 and 2003. Fifteen states experienced declines in the proportion of finalizations within one year of termination. The largest declines were in North Dakota (31 percentage points), South Dakota (27 percentage points), and Maine (24 percentage points). The largest increases in the percentage of finalizations occurring within one year of termination were in Missouri (21 points), Minnesota (21 points), and Idaho (28 points).

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Table 12. Missing Values of Time from TPR to Finalization

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	1.0%	3.3%	0.0%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	N/A	N/A
Arizona	4.3	4.4	2.0	1.3	2.4	N/A	0.0	0.2
Arkansas	0.5	0.0	2.2	9.2	14.3	10.1	18.8	33.3
California	1.6	0.4	0.7	0.4	7.8	0.6	0.0	0.0
Colorado	0.3	0.7	2.8	4.6	4.8	4.4	87.1	100
Connecticut	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.4	N/A
Delaware	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	30.0
DC	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	6.5	59.6	94.1
Florida	1.0	4.4	1.4	1.1	3.3	0.7	100	100
Georgia	3.8	0.3	1.3	0.3	0.2	0.0	5.8	7.8
Hawaii	0.6	4.9	3.9	0.0	1.8	3.0	23.3	46.1
Idaho	0.0	0.0	3.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	74.3	89.1
Illinois	1.7	1.5	2.1	0.6	10.4	14.3	30.9	28.3
Indiana	3.3	2.0	1.6	3.3	6.2	2.8	100	13.2
Iowa	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.6	64.9
Kansas	0.4	0.0	0.9	7.9	2.6	6.9	0.0	N/A
Kentucky	0.0	0.9	1.2	0.3	0.0	14.9	47.9	1.5
Louisiana	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.1	1.7	55.9	80.0
Maine	3.7	4.5	4.1	3.9	1.0	92.7	100	100
Maryland	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	15.6	91.2
Massachusetts	2.5	0.7	3.0	2.8	2.7	1.2	3.5	3.5
Michigan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	1.8	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.3	3.0	0.0	55.1
Mississippi	3.3	0.4	0.8	0.0	2.5	2.4	27.9	22.2
Missouri	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.6	N/A	N/A
Montana	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nebraska	5.5	5.2	2.7	12.7	20.4	N/A	100	100
Nevada	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	2.5	N/A	2.0	N/A
New Hampshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Mexico	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9	1.6	0.5	17.7	20.8
New York	4.0	5.5	7.9	4.1	3.5	4.5	2.7	N/A
North Carolina	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.5	11.8	81.4
North Dakota	0.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	N/A
Ohio	4.4	4.6	5.6	7.2	85.5	100	94.7	98.4
Oklahoma	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	5.6	4.4
Oregon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	13.7
Pennsylvania	0.1	0.0	1.5	0.6	0.1	0.3	1.1	0.7
Puerto Rico	1.4	4.7	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rhode Island	1.1	1.9	2.2	3.5	3.1	1.8	36.7	9.4
South Carolina	0.0	4.1	0.3	1.9	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	100
Tennessee	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	11.2	7.5
Texas	0.8	0.9	0.4	1.4	1.9	2.0	22.2	0.0
Utah	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	49.0
Vermont	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	9.7	1.8
Virginia	4.0	2.6	16.5	44.2	40.7	12.8	N/A	N/A
Washington	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	26.7	28.2
West Virginia	0.3	5.8	2.2	3.1	3.9	4.7	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.3	16.6	18.3
Wyoming	1.8	0.0	0.0	5.2	6.7	3.1	N/A	N/A
All States	1.4%	1.4%	1.8%	1.9%	7.6%	6.5%	22.2%	35.4%

Table 13. Average Time from TPR to Finalization (inYears)

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	1.55	1.69	1.71	1.53	1.6	1.69	N/A	N/A
Alaska	1.04	0.97	1.05	0.87	0.98	1.44	N/A	N/A
Arizona	1.27	1.18	1.27	1.36	1.38	N/A	1.44	1.46
Arkansas	0.99	1.13	0.98	0.92	0.95	1.19	1.21	1.18
California	1.38	1.36	1.33	1.2	1.11	1.32	1.16	1.09
Colorado	1.18	1.34	1.12	1.2	1.24	1.12	1.38	N/A
Connecticut	1.44	1.43	1.28	1.39	1.3	1.14	1.53	N/A
DC	0.99	1.44	1.01	0.82	0.8	1.36	0.53	0.75
Delaware	0.96	0.93	1.22	0.78	1.06	0.94	0.81	3.34
Florida	1.28	1.19	1.19	1.4	1.39	1.52	N/A	N/A
Georgia	1.67	1.64	1.6	1.61	1.63	1.7	2.73	1.57
Hawaii	0.9	1.04	1.14	1.18	1.01	1.08	1.29	1.17
Idaho	1.28	1.12	1.09	1.45	0.65	2.02	N/A	N/A
Illinois	0.97	1.05	1.04	0.89	0.93	0.98	1.15	1.18
Indiana	1.15	1.1	1.2	1.26	1.15	1.18	N/A	1.46
Iowa	1.06	1.12	1.22	1.17	1.21	1.21	1.14	1.21
Kansas	1.71	1.71	1.51	1.46	1.43	1.76	2.02	N/A
Kentucky	1.25	1.42	1.54	2.15	1.8	1.5	0.85	0.34
Louisiana	1.42	1.4	1.44	1.47	1.49	1.58	1.97	N/A
Maine	2.08	1.89	1.82	1.94	1.96	1.44	N/A	N/A
Maryland	1.26	1.3	1.34	1.17	1.3	1.22	1.12	0.81
Massachusetts	1.11	1.18	1.16	1.28	1.3	1.2	1.14	0.96
Michigan	1.47	1.4	1.41	1.28	1.31	1.4	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	1.74	1.92	1.83	2.09	1.97	2.12	2.44	1.28
Mississippi	1.23	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.63	2.1	2.08
Missouri	0.74	0.81	0.94	0.95	1.06	1.31	N/A	N/A
Montana	1.54	1.49	1.59	1.33	1.53	2.38	1.55	1.23
Nebraska	1.06	1.27	1.27	1.3	1.61	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	1.76	1.76	1.9	1.94	1.6	N/A	1.22	N/A
New Hampshire	1.07	0.95	0.9	0.81	1.1	1.27	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	1.48	1.33	1.25	1.21	1.07	1.25	1.23	1.22
New Mexico	1.22	1.17	1.19	1.07	1.28	1.26	1.5	1.44
New York	1.72	1.83	1.89	1.97	2.17	2.4	2.19	N/A
North Carolina	1.1	1.12	1.15	1.16	1.17	1.29	1.04	0.56
North Dakota	1.37	1.04	1.14	0.84	0.88	0.77	1.08	N/A
Ohio	1.72	1.65	1.55	1.5	1.03	N/A	1.76	1.6
Oklahoma	1.23	1.29	1.32	1.41	1.56	1.57	1.84	2.1
Oregon	1.23	1.21	1.25	1.21	1.35	1.4	1.47	1.51
Pennsylvania	1.3	1.06	1.03	1.05	0.98	0.92	1.16	1.27
Puerto Rico	0.91	1.14	1.34	1.04	0.5	0.49	0.28	0.31
Rhode Island	0.67	0.62	0.6	0.7	0.83	0.86	0.8	0.63
South Carolina	1.22	1.29	1.24	1.24	1.1	1.05	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	1.73	1.35	1.26	1.03	1.39	1.41	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	1.73	1.75	1.83	1.53	1.68	1.58	1.61	1.75
Texas	1.29	1.22	1.15	1.17	1.22	1.34	0.93	2.28
Utah	0.64	0.66	0.59	0.63	0.7	0.72	1.26	0.86
Vermont	1.21	1.16	1.49	1.79	1.42	1.31	1.82	0.8
Virginia	1.63	1.78	1.5	1.44	1.52	1.76	N/A	N/A
Washington	1.21	1.27	1.32	1.35	1.3	1.49	1.59	1.76
West Virginia	1.63	1.76	1.72	1.86	1.78	2.04	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	0.61	0.7	0.75	0.7	0.72	0.78	0.62	0.75
Wyoming	0.52	0.4	0.34	0.38	0.72	0.8	N/A	N/A
All States	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.28	1.3	1.42	1.42	1.46

Table 14. Distribution of Time from TPR to Finalization
Less than One Year from TPR to Finalization

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	39.2%	37.4%	36.7%	46.0%	41.2%	46.1%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	69.2	69.2	61.5	71.3	68.6	55.3	N/A	N/A
Arizona	55.0	55.5	54.5	46.2	44.0	N/A	39.9	33.4
Arkansas	62.9	58.2	62.1	67.1	70.3	53.9	51.9	57.1
California	50.3	48.5	46.2	52.9	61.2	52.5	59.0	63.7
Colorado	58.2	51.6	60.5	51.8	57.1	56.0	51.8	N/A
Connecticut	55.7	49.4	55.4	48.5	55.1	60.7	52.1	N/A
Delaware	69.3	45.9	62.4	77.7	66.7	66.1	81.0	66.7
DC	67.9	68.7	65.2	74.6	65.0	64.6	84.6	50.0
Florida	50.5	57.1	56.6	48.6	50.4	43.3	N/A	N/A
Georgia	42.2	37.0	36.2	39.2	41.9	36.8	11.4	29.0
Hawaii	71.8	64.1	64.8	56.1	68.1	64.4	52.6	57.1
Idaho	50.0	60.2	68.0	53.3	74.8	21.4	100	100
Illinois	70.3	67.8	64.1	71.4	72.4	69.0	62.3	60.0
Indiana	60.9	62.4	54.0	54.7	62.4	55.9	N/A	45.3
Iowa	61.8	59.1	56.0	56.8	54.5	53.0	61.0	56.3
Kansas	27.4	26.5	32.3	42.1	44.6	39.0	46.0	N/A
Kentucky	62.6	54.9	56.9	55.6	41.9	42.9	67.5	92.6
Louisiana	48.9	48.9	42.1	50.1	50.6	41.2	30.8	100
Maine	26.0	29.0	26.4	23.5	20.0	50.0	N/A	N/A
Maryland	61.3	55.0	49.3	58.1	53.0	56.8	52.4	64.7
Massachusetts	64.3	62.6	59.6	57.0	55.2	54.3	61.3	67.5
Michigan	44.2	45.8	42.3	45.7	47.5	45.2	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	42.5	31.9	35.0	29.2	27.4	21.1	26.6	59.2
Mississippi	59.7	64.6	59.1	57.6	55.4	44.0	20.0	19.1
Missouri	77.3	73.1	68.9	70.5	62.1	56.0	N/A	N/A
Montana	50.9	44.1	42.2	53.0	48.7	47.6	46.6	54.5
Nebraska	60.6	58.9	51.8	53.0	29.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	35.5	39.9	33.5	32.6	37.5	N/A	64.0	N/A
New Hampshire	66.4	68.4	70.5	70.8	69.3	66.7	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	41.1	47.8	56.5	61.5	64.6	53.4	54.0	58.4
New Mexico	63.2	65.8	60.9	58.4	54.7	55.6	51.0	47.6
New York	42.0	42.5	43.6	37.2	31.0	25.1	22.2	N/A
North Carolina	66.2	65.0	61.0	56.8	60.9	57.0	68.3	89.3
North Dakota	53.8	65.0	59.9	74.3	75.5	84.5	80.7	N/A
Ohio	46.4	42.4	39.8	45.2	62.3	N/A	33.9	26.3
Oklahoma	56.4	55.6	51.0	49.5	45.7	40.1	29.6	26.6
Oregon	52.8	54.0	52.9	51.0	48.0	40.0	36.9	34.9
Pennsylvania	51.7	62.8	64.3	59.4	62.8	68.4	63.2	48.0
Puerto Rico	73.5	60.1	71.9	70.1	78.8	82.6	91.3	93.9
Rhode Island	82.8	81.7	78.9	79.3	80.2	72.5	73.3	82.2
South Carolina	57.9	60.6	58.5	53.9	55.3	68.6	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	24.3	41.5	51.5	60.6	53.6	50.9	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	41.2	43.4	43.1	45.6	39.0	46.3	40.0	29.0
Texas	53.2	56.8	57.4	57.2	56.2	52.8	57.1	0.0
Utah	81.3	81.2	85.6	78.9	77.8	73.7	75.5	70.7
Vermont	55.1	55.6	50.9	55.7	47.5	48.2	32.2	39.5
Virginia	40.4	36.6	40.1	37.0	40.7	37.6	N/A	N/A
Washington	57.6	56.5	53.7	53.0	54.4	47.3	41.6	31.4
West Virginia	35.5	29.1	34.8	26.1	30.0	26.4	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	85.8	82.7	79.8	81.1	76.8	74.7	85.4	75.0
Wyoming	80.0	86.5	95.7	84.5	85.7	87.1	N/A	N/A
All States	53.9%	53.6%	52.1%	53.9%	55.1%	50.7%	47.1%	58.8%

Table 14. Distribution of Time from TPR to Finalization
One to Two Years from TPR to Finalization

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	37.1%	35.3%	31.6%	34.0%	36.5%	24.4%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	13.5	24.1	31.3	19.8	19.0	20.2	N/A	N/A
Arizona	30.8	32.6	32.0	39.5	39.2	N/A	39.1	47.9
Arkansas	29.5	24.9	27.1	28.5	22.3	28.0	28.9	30.9
California	30.6	31.2	37.3	36.1	28.0	30.7	30.1	25.4
Colorado	27.5	31.0	27.8	34.3	24.9	32.5	31.8	N/A
Connecticut	24.6	30.4	29.5	30.5	31.5	26.2	25.5	N/A
Delaware	17.8	25.6	29.9	15.5	30.3	16.1	4.8	21.6
DC	18.3	21.0	11.7	13.2	15.9	22.3	12.8	50.0
Florida	33.7	29.5	27.1	31.6	28.2	33.4	N/A	N/A
Georgia	32.9	38.5	41.7	40.0	35.0	37.4	36.8	49.5
Hawaii	21.2	25.9	22.0	29.6	23.9	20.6	28.1	28.6
Idaho	37.0	30.5	21.1	30.7	16.8	42.9	0.0	0.0
Illinois	16.4	15.7	20.7	20.1	19.6	22.3	26.0	24.3
Indiana	22.6	22.8	30.4	29.1	23.0	27.0	N/A	30.9
Iowa	29.4	30.1	29.1	30.7	32.9	35.1	29.1	29.7
Kansas	45.8	46.3	47.2	41.7	37.9	39.7	23.8	N/A
Kentucky	17.0	21.1	23.3	25.9	34.2	32.8	18.8	3.2
Louisiana	31.0	31.6	41.9	31.1	27.6	31.3	11.5	0.0
Maine	29.8	36.7	41.0	42.5	37.5	30.0	N/A	N/A
Maryland	20.4	26.8	32.8	28.4	30.0	29.5	38.1	23.5
Massachusetts	19.6	20.1	25.6	23.3	24.1	29.5	24.6	22.2
Michigan	36.5	36.6	38.4	41.0	38.6	36.4	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	33.3	36.3	36.6	33.5	34.1	34.9	41.9	25.3
Mississippi	23.9	20.8	30.3	29.2	29.9	28.3	40.0	47.6
Missouri	15.5	18.6	21.8	18.7	24.8	25.8	N/A	N/A
Montana	22.8	30.8	29.8	30.5	29.9	23.5	25.0	24.2
Nebraska	25.5	24.3	25.7	26.3	43.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	33.1	27.3	34.7	32.2	34.2	N/A	15.0	N/A
New Hampshire	19.9	20.2	20.0	27.1	22.6	19.6	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	38.3	34.4	28.8	22.3	23.9	31.6	33.0	28.2
New Mexico	19.1	15.6	21.7	29.9	29.5	28.1	21.6	27.4
New York	31.5	29.4	24.7	29.2	28.6	28.0	34.2	N/A
North Carolina	20.8	18.8	24.9	30.9	25.5	26.9	20.0	10.7
North Dakota	26.1	24.1	31.7	24.8	19.4	10.9	12.9	N/A
Ohio	25.2	29.9	36.9	32.6	24.2	N/A	32.2	52.6
Oklahoma	28.6	27.5	32.6	29.7	27.4	34.5	38.1	27.2
Oregon	32.6	30.6	28.9	37.1	29.8	44.5	44.1	47.5
Pennsylvania	31.5	25.1	23.8	26.6	26.0	20.9	20.5	41.1
Puerto Rico	14.7	24.4	9.1	13.0	13.5	11.7	5.8	2.0
Rhode Island	5.8	8.8	11.5	11.2	7.4	15.1	11.4	10.7
South Carolina	26.4	22.1	20.1	25.6	34.0	24.7	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	49.3	45.8	38.1	33.0	28.6	27.3	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	31.3	28.2	25.0	28.5	30.9	28.5	34.9	38.9
Texas	29.9	26.8	27.9	29.0	28.3	28.5	42.9	33.3
Utah	12.3	11.8	10.3	15.8	14.4	19.2	21.9	24.0
Vermont	32.3	32.0	31.9	29.5	33.1	36.8	33.9	33.9
Virginia	31.4	30.5	36.0	45.0	41.8	29.3	N/A	N/A
Washington	27.3	26.5	27.5	27.4	27.9	29.8	32.4	39.2
West Virginia	41.7	45.3	41.8	36.4	39.3	31.8	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	10.1	11.8	13.7	13.7	18.0	19.5	10.1	16.6
Wyoming	14.6	9.6	0.0	10.3	7.1	3.2	N/A	N/A
All States	27.9%	27.8%	30.0%	30.0%	27.5%	28.7%	29.5%	26.5%

Table 14. Distribution of Time from TPR to Finalization
Two to Three Years from TPR to Finalization

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	12.8%	16.1%	16.9%	10.5%	12.2%	13.0%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	14.4	4.0	3.6	7.4	5.8	16.0	N/A	N/A
Arizona	7.7	8.3	8.2	8.0	9.8	N/A	16.8	12.9
Arkansas	4.4	12.5	9.0	1.7	5.1	10.8	15.4	9.5
California	10.7	14.1	11.5	7.2	7.2	10.1	6.3	5.5
Colorado	8.8	9.0	6.9	8.3	9.9	6.2	9.4	N/A
Connecticut	11.4	10.4	8.8	16.0	6.7	9.6	9.6	N/A
Delaware	7.9	21.1	6.0	3.9	3.0	9.7	9.5	2.0
DC	7.9	2.8	11.3	7.5	8.3	8.5	0.0	0.0
Florida	10.3	7.3	10.5	11.0	13.1	13.9	N/A	N/A
Georgia	11.9	15.4	13.4	10.2	10.8	14.7	32.0	13.1
Hawaii	6.0	8.6	9.2	11.8	6.2	10.3	15.6	0.0
Idaho	9.4	5.1	5.5	6.6	5.6	28.6	0.0	0.0
Illinois	5.8	7.8	9.0	5.4	4.5	5.1	6.8	10.2
Indiana	8.0	9.7	8.3	7.8	7.3	9.4	N/A	13.0
Iowa	5.0	6.8	8.8	8.2	8.3	6.7	5.2	8.7
Kansas	16.2	17.6	14.6	9.3	11.8	8.7	14.3	N/A
Kentucky	9.8	11.4	9.5	6.8	14.4	14.1	8.6	1.0
Louisiana	12.1	13.1	8.9	9.8	11.4	13.3	30.8	0.0
Maine	26.2	21.9	20.3	19.2	26.0	10.0	N/A	N/A
Maryland	8.4	9.7	10.9	8.4	11.7	8.0	7.3	11.8
Massachusetts	10.9	10.1	9.4	11.1	11.9	11.3	8.5	6.7
Michigan	10.8	10.2	13.2	9.0	8.3	12.3	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	10.7	16.1	13.1	20.4	21.2	28.4	13.6	8.5
Mississippi	10.8	12.8	8.3	10.1	6.5	14.5	22.7	19.1
Missouri	3.6	4.6	5.4	6.4	6.4	7.4	N/A	N/A
Montana	17.0	14.2	17.8	11.0	12.8	10.1	16.2	15.2
Nebraska	10.4	7.9	15.1	10.3	18.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	18.2	20.9	14.1	17.4	18.3	N/A	9.0	N/A
New Hampshire	9.2	7.9	9.5	2.1	1.6	2.0	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	12.9	12.0	8.1	8.8	7.2	9.3	7.9	8.3
New Mexico	10.4	9.1	11.1	9.3	6.7	11.2	11.8	14.3
New York	14.0	11.6	12.7	13.8	16.0	17.6	20.8	N/A
North Carolina	6.9	9.7	8.5	7.9	7.8	8.3	5.0	0.0
North Dakota	8.4	8.0	5.6	0.0	2.9	3.6	0.0	N/A
Ohio	12.6	15.9	13.4	13.2	11.4	N/A	16.9	15.8
Oklahoma	9.2	8.6	8.9	11.3	14.4	14.7	19.9	19.1
Oregon	9.1	9.3	12.7	7.5	15.0	11.3	12.3	8.7
Pennsylvania	8.5	7.5	7.3	10.3	6.2	6.1	9.7	5.5
Puerto Rico	7.8	7.5	4.7	5.6	5.5	3.2	1.4	2.0
Rhode Island	5.8	4.8	8.1	5.6	4.6	6.4	12.2	3.9
South Carolina	9.6	7.6	11.8	17.5	9.0	2.1	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	21.5	7.8	8.2	4.3	6.0	14.6	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	13.5	10.6	11.2	12.6	17.0	13.1	15.4	19.9
Texas	10.1	10.0	10.1	9.3	9.5	10.4	0.0	66.7
Utah	3.9	3.2	1.7	4.3	6.8	6.6	1.3	4.0
Vermont	8.4	8.5	6.9	9.0	12.2	12.3	22.0	14.2
Virginia	15.8	18.9	17.9	10.0	6.2	18.5	N/A	N/A
Washington	8.2	9.2	11.5	11.4	9.6	11.2	15.9	18.3
West Virginia	13.1	15.0	13.8	25.8	18.0	24.9	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	2.3	3.3	4.1	3.9	3.4	4.2	2.3	5.7
Wyoming	3.6	1.9	0.0	5.2	4.8	0.0	N/A	N/A
All States	10.0%	10.7%	10.6%	9.2%	9.4%	10.8%	12.5%	8.6%

Table 14. Distribution of Time from TPR to Finalization
More than Three Years from TPR to Finalization

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Alabama	10.9%	11.2%	14.8%	9.5%	10.1%	16.5%	N/A	N/A
Alaska	2.9	2.7	3.6	1.5	6.6	8.5	N/A	N/A
Arizona	6.5	3.6	5.3	6.3	7.0	N/A	4.2	5.8
Arkansas	3.1	4.4	1.7	2.7	2.2	7.3	3.9	2.4
California	8.4	6.2	4.9	3.8	3.5	6.7	4.6	5.3
Colorado	5.5	8.4	4.7	5.6	8.1	5.3	7.1	N/A
Connecticut	8.2	9.8	6.3	5.0	6.7	3.5	12.8	N/A
Delaware	5.0	7.5	1.7	2.9	0.0	8.1	4.8	9.8
DC	5.8	7.5	11.7	4.7	10.8	4.6	2.6	0.0
Florida	5.5	6.1	5.8	8.8	8.3	9.4	N/A	N/A
Georgia	13.1	9.1	8.7	10.6	12.2	11.1	19.7	8.4
Hawaii	0.9	1.4	4.0	2.5	1.8	4.8	3.7	14.3
Idaho	3.6	4.2	5.5	9.5	2.8	7.1	0.0	0.0
Illinois	7.6	8.7	6.3	3.0	3.5	3.7	4.9	5.4
Indiana	8.6	5.1	7.2	8.3	7.3	7.6	N/A	10.8
Iowa	3.8	4.1	6.2	4.2	4.3	5.2	4.7	5.2
Kansas	10.7	9.6	5.9	6.9	5.6	12.6	15.9	N/A
Kentucky	10.6	12.6	10.2	11.7	9.4	10.2	5.1	3.2
Louisiana	8.1	6.4	7.0	9.0	10.5	14.2	26.9	0.0
Maine	18.0	12.5	12.3	14.7	16.5	10.0	N/A	N/A
Maryland	9.8	8.5	7.0	5.0	5.2	5.7	2.2	0.0
Massachusetts	5.2	7.2	5.4	8.6	8.8	4.9	5.5	3.6
Michigan	8.5	7.3	6.2	4.3	5.6	6.1	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	13.4	15.7	15.2	16.9	17.3	15.6	17.9	7.0
Mississippi	5.7	1.8	2.3	3.1	8.2	13.2	17.3	14.3
Missouri	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.4	6.7	10.8	N/A	N/A
Montana	9.4	10.9	10.2	5.5	8.6	18.8	12.2	6.1
Nebraska	3.5	8.9	7.4	10.3	8.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	13.2	11.9	17.8	17.8	10.0	N/A	12.0	N/A
New Hampshire	4.6	3.5	0.0	0.0	6.5	11.8	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	7.7	5.8	6.6	7.3	4.2	5.7	5.0	5.0
New Mexico	7.3	9.4	6.2	2.3	9.1	5.1	15.7	10.7
New York	12.4	16.6	19.0	19.9	24.3	29.2	22.8	N/A
North Carolina	6.1	6.5	5.5	4.5	5.8	7.9	6.7	0.0
North Dakota	11.8	2.9	2.8	0.9	2.2	0.9	6.5	N/A
Ohio	15.8	11.9	9.8	9.0	2.2	N/A	16.9	5.3
Oklahoma	5.8	8.4	7.4	9.5	12.5	10.7	12.4	27.2
Oregon	5.5	6.1	5.5	4.5	7.2	4.2	6.7	8.9
Pennsylvania	8.3	4.6	4.6	3.6	5.0	4.6	6.6	5.5
Puerto Rico	4.1	8.0	14.2	11.3	2.1	2.5	1.4	2.0
Rhode Island	5.8	4.8	1.5	4.0	7.8	6.0	3.0	3.2
South Carolina	6.1	9.7	9.7	3.0	1.8	4.5	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	4.9	4.9	2.1	2.1	11.9	7.3	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	13.9	17.8	20.8	13.3	13.1	12.2	9.7	12.2
Texas	6.9	6.4	4.5	4.4	6.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
Utah	2.6	3.8	2.3	1.0	1.1	0.6	1.3	1.3
Vermont	4.2	3.9	10.3	5.7	7.2	2.6	11.9	12.4
Virginia	12.4	14.0	6.0	8.0	11.3	14.6	N/A	N/A
Washington	6.8	7.7	7.2	8.2	8.1	11.6	10.1	11.1
West Virginia	9.7	10.6	9.6	11.7	12.7	16.9	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	1.8	2.2	2.4	1.2	1.7	1.6	2.1	2.7
Wyoming	1.8	1.9	4.3	0.0	2.4	9.7	N/A	N/A
All States	8.2%	7.9%	7.3%	6.8%	8.0%	9.9%	10.9%	6.2%

Modifications to the Public Use AFCARS Adoption Data

The following corrections were made:

Monthly Amount of Adoption Assistance Subsidy

New York's subsidy data included only observations of "0" or "1"; we treated these as missing. South Dakota and New Mexico (802 records) were inconsistent with other years' data and treated as missing. Values for Nevada (1040 records) and Mississippi (958 records) were divided by 100. For Rhode Island, 1998 and 1999 values were multiplied by 10. For Alaska and Georgia values were divided by 10 if greater than \$2,000. All subsidy values greater than \$10,000 were divided by 100 (331 records). Subsidy amounts for California (706 records), Illinois (239 records), Ohio (1,995 records), and other states (2,031 records) were divided by 12 if the recorded amount was greater than \$2,000 and evenly divisible by 12.

Race

Due to the differences in race coding in 1995-1999 and 2000-present data we recoded to create a uniform child and adoptive parent race variable. The variable "of color" equals 1 for non-white and Hispanic children and 0 otherwise. Arizona reversed coding for White, non-Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islander in 1999-2000. In 1999 Indiana reversed coding for Hispanic and non-Hispanic.

Special Needs Basis

Arkansas (63 records), Connecticut (1700 records), Delaware (22 records), Idaho (32 records), Maine (44 records), Nevada (101 records), and New Mexico (455 records) reported only one value for special needs basis in some years; we considered these as missing.