

# The AFCARS Dashboard

(Print Version)

Preliminary FFY<sup>1</sup> 2024 Estimates as of September 5, 2025 - No. 32

**SOURCE:** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FFY 2024 data<sup>2</sup>

Federal fiscal year	Numbers at a Glance					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number entering foster care during the FFY	252,198	216,450	206,867	186,602	174,112	170,943
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FFY	425,974	407,332	391,641	368,530	340,050	328,947
Number exiting foster care during the FFY	250,024	223,918	214,542	201,372	184,018	176,730
Number served by the foster care system during the FFY	675,926	631,192	606,145	569,879	524,077	505,682
Number with an adoption goal <sup>3</sup> on September 30 of the FFY	115,297	110,276	105,822	101,401	78,481	70,421
Number legally free on September 30 of the FFY	74,927	66,846	68,287	67,825	54,836	49,994
Number exiting to adoption during the FFY	64,238	56,372	53,343	52,985	50,011	46,935

## FFY 2024 AFCARS Foster Care Data Release

This report provides some, but not all, of the same information that is available in the dashboard. All information presented in this report is also available in the dashboard, so the dashboard is the primary source for AFCARS counts. This report is provided as a printer-friendly resource.

### AFCARS 2020 Data

The dashboards presented here represent AFCARS based on the final rule published on May 12, 2020 (see [85 FR 28410](#) and [Technical Bulletin 20](#)). Data collected under this final rule are referred to as "AFCARS 2020" data and were first collected starting with the 2023 federal fiscal year. Prior to that, AFCARS data were collected based on the final rule published on December 22, 1993. This report only uses AFCARS 2020 data, except for data presented in the "Numbers at a Glance" that come from years prior to 2023. While counts for years prior to 2023 are displayed here, they should be considered separate from the counts for AFCARS 2020 data because the reporting population changed.

Data presented here include all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and title IV-E tribes. At the time this report was developed, Washington and Wyoming had not submitted AFCARS 2020 data and, therefore, are not included. While some U.S. territories other than Puerto Rico and some title IV-E tribes have begun to submit AFCARS data, they are not included in this report at this time. Any reference in this report to "jurisdictions" includes all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the title IV-E tribes, unless otherwise noted.

### Data Limitations

AFCARS 2020 data feature numerous new data elements and require a new reporting format for jurisdictions' data submissions. As a result, some jurisdictions are still in a capacity-building phase as they endeavor to submit high-quality and structurally compliant AFCARS data submissions. This is most impactful for data elements that are either new or have new components, particularly living arrangements, permanency plans, and termination of parental rights. Caution and reason should be used when interpreting these fields. If a result seems unusual or uncharacteristic, it may be due to the jurisdiction's continuing efforts to ensure its infrastructure, data system, policies, and training support accurate AFCARS 2020 submissions. Refer to AFCARS [Technical Bulletin 20](#) for specific information on the data elements and how data are to be reported.

While we recognize that jurisdictions continue to refine and improve their data submissions, the overall counts of entries, children in foster care on the last day of the federal fiscal year (September 30), and exits are approximately as expected. That said, we expect to see continued changes and improvement as jurisdictions refine their reporting methods. Publishing the report based on the current information recognizes the efforts jurisdictions have made to submit these data, provides the public with information about child welfare system dynamics, and serves as a starting point for continued improvement of the AFCARS data submissions.

<sup>1</sup> "FFY" refers to the federal fiscal year, from October 1 to September 30.

<sup>2</sup> Data from both the regular and revised AFCARS file submissions received by September 5, 2025, 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., the number in foster care on September 30 may not match the sum across ages for that group).

<sup>3</sup> On September 30 of the federal fiscal year, the child's permanency plan was listed as "adoption."

**Federal Fiscal Year**

Data presented here are based on episodes occurring during a federal fiscal year, which spans October 1 to September 30. For example, federal fiscal year 2024 spans October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024.

**Episode Reporting**

Only the last episode during a federal fiscal year is counted. For example, if during a single federal fiscal year, a child entered care, exited care, reentered care, and exited care again, then only the reentry and subsequent exit are described here. The prior episode is not included. As such, the counts displayed here are counts of children and not counts of episodes.

**Ages Included**

All counts include children ages 0–23. We acknowledge that some are not actually “children,” but we use that language to be consistent with public documentation on AFCARS. Anywhere rates are provided, the ages are restricted to 0–17 to be consistent with other Children’s Bureau reports.

**Adoptions**

Summary information about adoption characteristics can be found in the report for the relevant population. All adoption information is with respect to adoptions from foster care and does not include non-foster care adoptions placed by a private agency. Adoption exits are summarized in the “Children Exiting Foster Care” section, and the subpopulations of children who have a permanency plan for adoption and children who are legally free are described in the tables in this report. See below for the definition of the term “legally free.”

**Legally Free**

Children for whom parental rights are terminated for all parents are referred to as “legally free.” This is separate from the child’s permanency plan, which may or may not indicate a plan for adoption.

**Rates**

Entry and foster care rates for demographic characteristics such as age and race are presented in different sections of this report. Entry rates can be found in the “Children Entering Foster Care” section, while foster care rates are located in the “Children in Foster Care” section. All rates are expressed per 1,000 children in the population and exclude ages 18–23 for consistency with other Children’s Bureau reports. The “Children Exiting Foster Care” section of the report does not include rate calculations.

**Data Release Notes**

These preliminary estimates are for AFCARS submissions received by September 5, 2025.



### Children Entering Foster Care During FFY 2024 (N=170,943)

Age at entry	Percent	Number	Rate	Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number	Rate
Less than 1 year	19%	32,122	9.04	American Indian/Alaska Native	3%	4,336	7.29
1-5 years	28%	47,160	2.54	Asian	1%	1,027	0.25
6-10 years	21%	35,635	1.77	Black or African American	23%	39,075	3.88
11-16 years	27%	46,351	1.83	Hispanic (of any race) <sup>4</sup>	20%	34,924	1.77
17 years	4%	6,133	1.37	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0%	419	2.83
18-23 years	2%	3,542		Two or more races	9%	14,965	4.39
<b>Circumstances at entry<sup>5</sup></b>		<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	White	42%	75,571	2.14
Educational neglect	4%	7,408		Abandoned/declined/unknown	2%	3,218	
Medical neglect	3%	4,805		Missing race/ethnicity	0%	408	
Neglect	55%	94,224		<b>Permanency plan at entry</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	
Physical abuse	13%	21,690		Adoption	4%	6,151	
Psychological abuse	4%	6,514		Guardianship	2%	2,906	
Sex trafficking	0%	570		Live with relative(s)	1%	1,723	
Sexual abuse	4%	6,446		Planned permanent living arrangement	2%	3,924	
Child alcohol use	0%	606		Reunification	69%	117,161	
Child behavior problem	8%	13,227		Not yet established	23%	39,078	
Child drug use	2%	2,901		<b>Living arrangement at entry</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	
Child requested placement	1%	2,476		Non-relative	30%	50,929	
Diagnosed condition	1%	2,320		Licensed	29%	49,745	
Runaway	1%	1,170		Unlicensed	1%	1,184	
Caretaker alcohol use	7%	11,735		Pre-adoptive	2%	3,190	
Caretaker drug use	31%	53,279		Licensed	2%	3,130	
Caretaker impairment cognitive	2%	4,164		Unlicensed	0%	60	
Caretaker impairment, physical or emotional	5%	9,394		Relative or kin	43%	73,636	
Death of caretaker	1%	2,192		Licensed	17%	29,768	
Domestic violence	9%	16,101		Unlicensed	26%	43,868	
Failure to return	1%	1,448		Shelter care	1%	1,999	
Homelessness	5%	7,954		Licensed	1%	1,923	
Inadequate housing	9%	16,177		Unlicensed	0%	76	
Incarceration of caretaker	7%	11,876		Therapeutic	5%	8,645	
Parental immigration detainment or deportation	0%	162		Licensed	5%	8,144	
Abandonment	5%	7,910		Unlicensed	0%	501	
Inadequate access to medical services	1%	1,404		Group home	6%	9,514	
Inadequate access to mental health	1%	2,469		Independent living	2%	2,674	
Prenatal alcohol exposure	0%	623		Institution	4%	6,564	
Prenatal drug exposure	3%	5,950		Juvenile justice	1%	932	
Voluntary adoption	1%	1,158		Placed at home	1%	1,146	
Whereabouts unknown	0%	816		Residential care	5%	8,750	
				Runaway	0%	854	
				Whereabouts unknown	1%	1,334	
				Missing data	0%	776	

<sup>4</sup> All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

<sup>5</sup> Children can enter care with multiple circumstances; therefore, the summation of circumstances can exceed the total number of entries.

**Children in Foster Care on September 30, 2024 (N=328,947)**

Age on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number	Rate
Less than 1 year	7%	22,097	6.22
1-5 years	30%	99,858	5.38
6-10 years	21%	70,677	3.50
11-16 years	28%	90,596	3.58
17 years	6%	19,614	4.38
18-23 years	8%	26,105	
Permanency plan on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number	
Adoption	21%	70,421	
Guardianship	6%	18,190	
Live with relative(s)	1%	4,210	
Planned permanent living arrangement	9%	29,366	
Reunification	43%	140,806	
Not yet established	20%	65,954	

Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number	Rate
American Indian/Alaska Native	3%	8,446	14.62
Asian	1%	1,769	0.43
Black or African American	25%	81,101	8.06
Hispanic (of any race) <sup>6</sup>	21%	69,931	3.54
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0%	673	4.55
Two or more races	9%	28,706	8.42
White	40%	132,803	3.98
Abandoned/declined/unknown	2%	5,043	
Missing race/ethnicity	0%	475	

Living arrangement on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number
Non-relative	28%	92,808
Licensed	28%	91,178
Unlicensed	0%	1,630
Pre-adoptive	3%	10,513
Licensed	3%	9,671
Unlicensed	0%	842
Relative or kin	39%	127,449
Licensed	22%	71,598
Unlicensed	17%	55,851
Shelter care	0%	1,166
Licensed	0%	1,092
Unlicensed	0%	74
Therapeutic	9%	28,365
Licensed	8%	25,982
Unlicensed	1%	2,383
Group home	4%	13,234
Independent living	4%	12,200
Institution	2%	7,555
Juvenile justice	1%	2,111
Placed at home	4%	12,637
Residential care	4%	14,541
Runaway	1%	2,841
Whereabouts unknown	0%	1,484
Missing data	1%	2,070

<sup>6</sup> All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.



### Children With a Permanency Plan for Adoption on September 30, 2023 (N=70,421)

Age on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number	Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
Less than 1 year	3%	2,303	American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	1,508
1-5 years	38%	26,485	Asian	0%	296
6-10 years	26%	18,340	Black or African American	24%	16,652
11-16 years	29%	20,331	Hispanic (of any race) <sup>7</sup>	21%	14,522
17 years	3%	2,163	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0%	97
18-23 years	1%	799	Two or more races	10%	7,017
<b>Permanency plan on September 30, 2024</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	White	41%	29,169
Adoption	100%	70,421	Abandoned/declined/unknown	2%	1,104
Guardianship	0%	0	Missing race/ethnicity	0%	56
Live with relative(s)	0%	0	<b>Living arrangement on September 30, 2024</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Planned permanent living arrangement	0%	0	Non-relative	33%	23,123
Reunification	0%	0	Licensed	32%	22,740
Not yet established	0%	0	Unlicensed	1%	353
			Pre-adoptive	9%	6,414
			Licensed	8%	5,775
			Unlicensed	1%	639
			Relative or kin	36%	25,245
			Licensed	23%	16,059
			Unlicensed	13%	9,186
			Shelter care	0%	121
			Licensed	0%	112
			Unlicensed	0%	9
			Therapeutic	11%	7,524
			Licensed	9%	7,029
			Unlicensed	1%	645
			Group home	3%	2,100
			Independent living	0%	280
			Institution	2%	1,298
			Juvenile justice	0%	237
			Placed at home	0%	197
			Residential care	4%	2,737
			Runaway	0%	266
			Whereabouts unknown	0%	15
			Missing data	1%	864

<sup>7</sup> All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

### Children Legally Free on September 30, 2024 (N=49,994)

Age on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number	Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
Less than 1 year	2%	827	American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	1,045
1–5 years	33%	16,703	Asian	0%	210
6–10 years	23%	11,737	Black or African American	22%	11,050
11–16 years	31%	15,303	Hispanic (of any race) <sup>8</sup>	21%	10,357
17 years	6%	2,931	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0%	97
18–23 years	5%	2,493	Two or more races	10%	5,226
Permanency plan on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number	White	43%	21,435
Adoption	70%	34,809	Abandoned/declined/unknown	1%	531
Guardianship	2%	1,139	Missing race/ethnicity	0%	43
Live with relative(s)	1%	310	Living arrangement on September 30, 2024	Percent	Number
Planned permanent living arrangement	6%	3,088	Non-relative	27%	13,272
Reunification	7%	3,287	Licensed	26%	13,049
Not yet established	15%	7,361	Unlicensed	0%	223
			Pre-adoptive	10%	5,181
			Licensed	9%	4,735
			Unlicensed	1%	446
			Relative or kin	32%	16,128
			Licensed	19%	9,653
			Unlicensed	13%	6,475
			Shelter care	0%	129
			Licensed	0%	118
			Unlicensed	0%	11
			Therapeutic	14%	6,829
			Licensed	12%	6,065
			Unlicensed	2%	764
			Group home	4%	2,043
			Independent living	2%	1,046
			Institution	2%	855
			Juvenile justice	1%	301
			Placed at home	0%	138
			Residential care	6%	2,796
			Runaway	1%	289
			Whereabouts unknown	0%	225
			Missing data	2%	762

<sup>8</sup> All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

### Children Exiting Foster Care During FFY 2024 (N=176,730)

Age at exit	Percent	Number	Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
Less than 1 year	4%	6,503	American Indian/Alaska Native	3%	4,535
1–5 years	36%	63,534	Asian	1%	1,099
6–10 years	23%	40,736	Black or African American	21%	37,549
11–16 years	23%	41,069	Hispanic (of any race) <sup>9</sup>	21%	37,954
17 years	4%	6,673	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0%	423
18–23 years	10%	18,215	Two or more races	9%	15,247
Exit reason	Percent	Number	White	43%	76,836
Adoption	27%	46,935	Abandoned/declined/unknown	2%	2,724
Death of child	0%	391	Missing race/ethnicity	0%	363
Emancipation	9%	15,379	Living arrangement at exit	Percent	Number
Guardianship	11%	19,082	Non-relative	16%	29,072
Live with relative	6%	11,359	Licensed	16%	28,147
Reunification	45%	79,209	Unlicensed	1%	925
Runaway or whereabouts unknown	0%	661	Pre-adoptive	10%	18,547
Transfer to another agency	1%	2,068	Licensed	8%	14,984
Missing data	1%	1,646	Unlicensed	2%	3,563
Time in care	Percent	Number	Relative or kin	38%	37,894
Less than 8 days	4%	6,934	Licensed	19%	34,231
8–30 days	3%	5,279	Unlicensed	19%	33,663
31–182 days	12%	21,871	Shelter care	0%	615
183–365 days	16%	28,486	Licensed	0%	595
1–1.5 years	20%	27,652	Unlicensed	0%	20
1.5–2 years	16%	22,387	Therapeutic	5%	8,070
2–3 years	13%	29,163	Licensed	4%	7,693
More than 3 years	17%	34,958	Unlicensed	0%	431
			Group home	3%	5,290
			Independent living	4%	6,811
			Institution	1%	2,134
			Juvenile justice	1%	1,282
			Placed at home	17%	29,390
			Residential care	2%	4,180
			Runaway	1%	1,827
			Whereabouts unknown	0%	417
			Missing data	1%	1,201

<sup>9</sup> All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.