

COMING TOGETHER

FOR KENTUCKY'S CHILDREN



Kentucky Citizen
Foster Care
Review Board

2021
ANNUAL
REPORT



CFCRB volunteers advocate for Kentucky's children

*John D. Minton Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky*

Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers come from all walks of life and all parts of the state to donate their time to Kentucky's children. They review the case of every child in out-of-home care due to dependency, neglect and abuse. These reviews are required by law, with the judge receiving recommendations on the best option for giving a child a safe and permanent home.

This service is a vital part of Kentucky's child welfare system as the state continues to report a large number of children in the custody of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

During Fiscal Year 2021, there were 11,278 children in care, with 746 CFCRB volunteers reviewing 19,140 cases.

These volunteers have a heart for helping children in need and I am grateful for their hard work and dedication.

The Department of Family & Juvenile Services at the Administrative Office of the Courts administers this important program and I appreciate the committed court staff who support it.

I hope you will enjoy reading the 2021 CFCRB Annual Report. You can learn how to volunteer by visiting kycourts.gov and clicking on Court Programs/Family & Juvenile Services/Citizen Foster Care Review Board.

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Progress Report for Fiscal Year 2021 | 12 | Interested Party Review process now used in 110 counties |
| 1 | Snapshot of Kentucky Foster Care System | 12 | Total CFCRB Reviews FY 2021 |
| 2 | 2022 Recommendations for Legislative & Policy Reform | 12 | Total CFCRB Reviews by County/Local Board FY 2021 |
| 2 | CFCRB volunteers met with legislators during Children's Advocacy Week | 15 | Working together, CFCRB volunteers do much good |
| 2 | CFCRB Mission & Vision | 15 | Child and Family Services Reviews analyze Kentucky's child welfare system |
| 3 | CFCRB hosts regional forums: Tell us what you think | 16 | A Heart For Children |
| 7 | CFCRB Overview by the Numbers | 17 | Advocates |
| 7 | Out-of-Home Care Demographics | 18 | Success Stories |
| 8 | Time in Out-of-Home Care | 19 | Training programs help volunteers stay current |
| 9 | Exiting Out-of-Home Care | 19 | AOC Department of Family & Juvenile Services |
| 10 | Permanency Through Adoption | 20 | CFCRB Executive Committee |
| 10 | Placement Stability | 21 | AOC Family Services Coordinators |
| 11 | Profile of CFCRB Volunteers | | |

Progress Report on Kentucky Children in Foster Care

Fiscal Year 2021: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021



*Cletus Poat
State Chair
Citizen Foster Care Review Board*

It is my distinct pleasure to present the 2021 Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board Annual Report. The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed look at the children served by the CFCRB program and the activities of the review boards.

CFCRB volunteers assist Kentucky families and children by conducting mandated in-depth reviews of children in out-of-home care and providing judges with detailed findings and recommendations. Our goal is to improve services for Kentucky's foster children and work toward permanent placements in a timely manner.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CFCRB has seen increased participation in its interested party reviews. The use of virtual meetings has made it easier for interested parties to attend the review without traveling long distances or missing work.

The same is true for the CFCRB Regional Community Forums, which have seen the most significant jump in attendance since the forums began in 2018. Hosting the forums virtually has given the public greater access and produced more impactful conversations regarding services for families and children.

The CFCRB provided training to help volunteers navigate the virtual world in which we have been operating for the last two years. The volunteers have also used virtual platforms for additional training opportunities.

The CFCRB also works to reduce racial and ethnic inequities by using data on the disparities for children in out-of-home care to make more informed recommendations.

My admiration for CFCRB volunteers continues to grow. If anyone can embrace change and move forward, it is our volunteers. Their legacy of dedication and commitment endures through the children's lives they have impacted.

Snapshot of Kentucky's Foster Care System

CFCRB Reviews. In FY 2021, 746 CFCRB volunteers conducted 7,730 case file reviews and 11,410 interested party reviews for a total of 19,140 reviews of 11,278 children. In FY 2020, there were 744 volunteers who conducted 23,641 total reviews of 13,737 children.

Note: A technical error caused a delay in exporting information from the TWIST database into CATS, which resulted in a reduction in the number of reviews for FY 2021.

Age of Children Served. Of the children reviewed, those 5 and younger remain the largest age group at 32%, with ages 11-15 at 24% and ages 6-10 at 22%.

Length of Stay. The average length of stay for children in care was 28 months, an increase over the 23.9 months reported in FY 2020. System delays resulting from the pandemic contributed to the increase in the average length of stay.

Number of Placements. Children experienced an average of 2.03 placements per commitment, which is in line with the federal expectation of no more than 2 placements until a child achieves permanency.

CFCRB Meetings. The review boards that use IPR as the standard for reviewing all cases increased to 78% in FY 21 from 74% in FY 2020.

Reunification. Of the children reviewed, 37% were released through reunification to parents or primary caregivers in FY 2021. Another 21% were released through placement with relatives. These numbers are consistent with FY 2020.

Finalized Adoption. In FY 2021, 28% of children achieved adoption, an increase over 26% in FY 2020. Children with a finalized adoption spent 38.8 months in care, an increase from 35.5 months in FY 2020.

Exiting Care. In FY 2021, 12% of youth aged out of care, which was consistent with FY 2020.

Barriers to Permanency. In FY 2021, the CFCRB reported that the top four barriers to permanency were substance use disorder, chronic mental health issues, domestic violence and systemic delays.

Solutions to Address Barriers. In FY 2021, the CFCRB identified the top four solutions to address barriers as substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, trauma-centered treatment and family reunification services.

2022 Recommendations for Legislative & Policy Reform

The Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board is required by KRS 620.320(5) to evaluate and make annual recommendations to the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the governor and the Child Welfare Oversight and Advisory Committee regarding the laws, practices, policies and procedures that affect permanence for children in out-of-home placement. The CFCRB State Board approved the following legislative recommendations for 2022:

CFCRB Board Membership

Recommends amending KRS 620.190(2)(e) to allow non-Department for Community Based Services employees in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to serve on local CFCRB boards. The suggested language would read: “Employees of the Department for Community Based Services shall be prohibited from serving on the local citizen foster care review board.”

The original wording was in place before the merger of the Cabinet for Health Services and the Cabinet for Families and Children, and it prohibits participation by potential volunteers from CHFS departments that are not directly involved with dependency, abuse and neglect cases.

Statewide Expansion of Family Court

Supports a future judicial redistricting plan that brings Family Court to every county in the commonwealth. The CFCRB has historically regarded the statewide expansion of Family Court as a high priority due to improved outcomes for families and children who have access to the expanded services provided by Family Court.

Equitable & Affordable Broadband Service Delivery

Recommends that the KentuckyWired broadband project provide equity in service delivery so that all Kentucky families and children can afford access to the internet and successfully participate in online services, including child welfare, educational and medical platforms.

Address Disproportionality & Disparity

Supports legislative and policy efforts that require child-serving agencies to gather data and use it to address disproportionality and disparity affecting children and families. This can be done through annual strategic plans and reduction goals. The recommendations are to:

- Review and update criteria identifying youth risk factors that may lead to negative activities such as gang recruitment and involvement.
- Create and promote strength-based, asset-building services and trainings to assist families and youth affected by these behaviors.
- Collect and share data related to these activities.

Services for Transition-Age Youth

Recommends the continuance of special services, extensions and exceptions provided to transition-age youth through the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

CFCRB volunteers met with legislators during Children’s Advocacy Week

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Children’s Advocacy Week took place remotely Feb. 1-5, 2021. Several CFCRB volunteers met virtually with legislators over the course of the week. The CFCRB is one of the sponsors of the event, which began in 2004 to help advocates across the state join forces on behalf of the safety, health, education and economic well-being of children and families.



CFCRB Mission

To ensure safe, permanent, timely placement of Kentucky’s children in out-of-home care.

CFCRB Vision

With respect to children in care:

To ensure adequate and necessary services are provided to families and children with the utmost importance given to safety, well-being and permanency.

With respect to the judges we serve:

To provide timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed information about children in care so as to promote knowledgeable permanency decisions.

With respect to the CFCRB volunteers:

To promote awareness and understanding regarding children’s issues through educational opportunities at local, regional and state levels.

With respect to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services:

To provide meaningful, respectful feedback regarding paths to permanency.

CFCRB hosts regional forums: Tell us what you think

In 2018, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 1 to reform Kentucky's foster care system by removing barriers to children being placed in permanent homes.

HB 1 amended KRS 620.270 to require the Citizen Foster Care Review Board to participate in regional community forums at least twice a year and present the findings to the Supreme Court, governor and legislature, per KRS 620.320 (5)(c). These forums allow the public to discuss their concerns and identify barriers to the safety, well-being and timely permanency of children in care.

The following findings are the result of CFCRB Regional Community Forums held in the summer and fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021. The findings are based on concerns and recommendations from the public and have been categorized by party, stakeholder group and topic.

The 2021 forums were conducted virtually, leading to increased participation by community partners.

Note: These comments do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Kentucky Court of Justice elected officials and employees.

SUMMER 2020 REGIONAL FORUMS: ISSUES & CONCERNS

Shift to Virtual Interactions

- Virtual opportunities for services show increased participation by foster parents and biological parents; virtual opportunities may continue to be offered post-pandemic protocols.
- Using a virtual platform removes the barriers of day care needs, work schedules and transportation.
- Virtual services are more accessible in rural areas than non-virtual services.
- Youth report that virtual independent visits allow them to be "heard" more due to the reduced distractions in the home.
- Concerns regarding lack of oversight of potential abuse or neglect for at-risk children.
- Concerns that there can be limited internet services and technology in rural areas.
- Some services are not being offered or cannot be conducted virtually, therefore creating a barrier for reunification.
- Some youth in care have reported that they do not like participating in therapy virtually.
- Concern that Batterer's Intervention Program classes are not being offered virtually to domestic violence perpetrators.

Access/Barriers to Services

- Need increased family reunification services and housing services.
- Need access to long-term drug treatment programs for adults.
- Need more independent living services for recommitted youth placed through private child care organizations.
- Housing barriers are an ongoing issue for families working on reunification.
- Service providers are focusing on obtaining approval for evidence-based practices to meet Family First requirements.

- More wraparound services are needed that can be placed in homes quickly.
- More services are needed for youth aging out of the system.
- Lack of resources (therapists and training for foster parents) for children in the LGBTQ+ community and youth struggling with gender identity.
- Lack of accommodation for LGBTQ+ youth in residential care.
- DCBS's Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team program has been successful in keeping families together and should be expanded throughout the state.
- DCBS's Kentucky Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents program serves a similar purpose as START and is showing success in some areas.

Safety, Well-Being & Permanency

- Lack of openings and restrictions due to pandemic protocols create barriers to families receiving family preservation services.
- Lack of family preservation services may cause significant challenges for permanency.
- Delays in termination of parental rights hearings are affecting permanency. Court process does not appear to be consistent across counties.
- There is the possibility of exceptions to the Adoption and Safe Families Act that would allow biological parents more time to complete their case plans.
- Concerns regarding potential delays in permanency due to parental delays in treatment and taking longer to complete case plans.
- DCBS is requesting input from physicians and medical staff on medically fragile children.

- Administrative Office of the Courts is sending reports monthly to local judges to identify cases nearing permanency and still requiring court action.
- Home evaluations are a barrier for new foster parent certification due to pandemic protocols.
- Need mentoring program for foster parents.
- Foster parents, judges, and CFCRB and CASA volunteers need training on how trauma plays a role in a child's life.
- Foster parents, caregivers and biological families need training on LGBTQ+ issues.

Communication With DCBS & the Courts

- Foster parents reported concerns of poor communication between foster parents and social workers.
- DCBS is hosting town hall meetings to improve relationships with foster and biological families.
- Concerns about high rate of employee turnover in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
- Courts would like to see more foster parents at hearings.
- Concerns over not having enough or any contact with the guardian ad litem.
- Foster parents need improved communication regarding current court process (court dates/visitations).
- CASA volunteers are concerned about the lack of in-person visits during pandemic protocols.

- CFCRB volunteers would like to see more recruitment and certification social workers attending interested party reviews.

Overall Comments & Suggestions

- Virtual access has improved the participation of biological parents and foster parents in CFCRB reviews, DCBS meetings and court hearings.
- Communities should continue to develop creative solutions for services.
- Additional services are needed throughout the state, including family preservation services, long-term substance use disorder programs, LGBTQ+ services, independent living services and programs for youth aging out of care, and mentoring programs recommended for new foster parents and for social workers.
- Need to improve communication among foster parents, DCBS and the courts, particularly regarding court hearings.
- Clarification and/or additional accountability is needed within legislation about the responsibilities of guardian ad litem.
- During the reunification process, housing barriers for biological parents should continue to be examined and addressed.
- Training needs persist around trauma and LGBTQ+ youth for key stakeholders.

FALL 2020 REGIONAL FORUMS: ISSUES & CONCERNS

Family Preservation & Reunification Services

- Need mental health supports for children in residential placements due to COVID-19 limiting face-to-face visits.
- Need additional resources for virtual parenting classes for families.
- Concerns that reunification services and most programs are not culturally sensitive.
- DCBS Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team program has a high success rate with parents and is needed throughout the state.
- COVID-19 restrictions that limited therapeutic supervised visitation had a negative impact on family reunification.
- Need for Applied Behavioral Analysis therapy for children with low IQ and behavior disorders as well as for children on the autism spectrum. This is a very specific therapy and it is difficult to locate trained therapists throughout the state.

Relative & Fictive Kin Placements

- Fictive kin placements do not receive the same monetary support as foster parents.
- Concerns that lack of day care services during the pandemic interfered with the ability of relative caregivers to maintain employment.
- Need mental health services for caregivers for those providing relative and fictive kin placements.
- Need more resources to educate relatives about the child removal process, case planning, and understanding timelines and requirements.
- Need additional training on foster parent rights after certification.
- Relative and fictive kin placements should be referred to support services.
- Currently there is no financial support for services for relative and fictive kin placements.
- More relative placement resources are needed throughout the state; resources that are available are difficult to locate.
- Need more third-party visitation supervisors throughout the state.
- Mentors are needed for relative and fictive kin placements.

Foster Parents' Rights

- Foster parents have a right to attend court hearings per KRS 620.030(r); need to address inconsistent participation throughout the state.
- Foster parents should be trained on what they can expect when they attend court.
- Virtual links for court hearings need to be provided in a more timely manner to allow foster parents time to adjust their schedules to attend hearings.
- Foster parents need additional training that outlines the expectations of fostering. "Foster to Adopt" signs are seen throughout the state and should be removed from private child care agencies.
- More trauma-informed care training is needed for foster parents; children leaving a foster home can be traumatic for the foster parents.
- High-quality transition plans are needed for the children, foster parents and biological parents when children are being reunified with their families.

Racial & Ethnic Disparities

- Overrepresentation of children and families of color is seen within the system throughout the state.
- Disparities exist when military children are removed from military families and lose services they could have accessed while on base.
- Black and Hispanic families have fewer opportunities to work with in-home services prior to removal and are more likely than White families to go directly to the court system.
- Need more foster homes of color and diverse cultural backgrounds throughout the state.
- Social workers need more training to identify and meet the needs of youth who have cultural and ethnic differences in their placement.
- Foster homes with children of color need more resources on how to take care of the child's specific needs, such as hair and skin care.
- Culturally specific training should be provided to foster parents when they receive a child of a different culture, race or ethnicity.

- More translation services are needed for foster parents; foster families should not have to use Google Translate or other children in the home to communicate with the child.
- Minority youth need a stronger voice related to their care.
- Foster parents should be encouraged to improve how they listen to and respond to the needs of foster youth.
- Need for more foster homes able to take multiple sibling groups, teens, medically complex children, and Black and Hispanic children, especially in rural areas.
- Need more comprehensive linking among the databases of different agencies, such as CATS, TWIST and CourtNet.
- Need more collaboration among law enforcement, DCBS, and families.
- Need to continually discuss and train on racial and ethnic disparities.
- Racial trauma training is being made available in parts of the state and needs to continue.

Open Discussion

- Adoption finalizations are still being delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions; some adoptions can take up to two years.
- Foster parents should know the general goal and the trajectory of the case; however, biological parents have rights of confidentiality so specific case plan tasks and progress are not shared with foster parents.
- Technology needs to be provided to biological parents as needed so that court hearings are not delayed.
- Mentors are needed throughout the state for former and current foster youth, as well as for foster parents and relative and fictive kin caregivers.
- Foster parents need additional training on services available to youth exiting care.
- KYRise website should be updated regularly to provide transitioning youth with current independent living resources.
- Transitional planning should begin as early as possible to give exiting youth the best possible outcome.
- Former foster youth recommended that social workers and foster parents help them identify what skills they may need but be unaware of for independent living. These can include cooking, budgeting, filing taxes, finding housing, seeking financial aid for school, making appointments and more.

SPRING 2021 REGIONAL FORUMS: ISSUES & CONCERNS

Services

- All services should be developed and operated in a way that meets specific needs related to gender, culture, ethnicity, race, language, ability, religion, poverty and values. These needs should be identified as early as possible and DCBS should make referrals when cultural needs are not being met.
- Need continued expansion and increased funding for reunification and prevention services across the state, including but not limited to the expansion of the START and KSTEP programs. This expansion is especially needed in rural areas where there is an ongoing struggle to access services.
- Address barriers to accessing services by expanding virtual services and internet access.
- Need improved transportation services to help families access services and visitation in person.
- Need to better educate families on what services are available in their area.
- Need more prevention services that can work with school resources.
- Collaboration among schools, DCBS, families and other community partners could improve outcomes for families in need.
- DCBS needs to be restructured and modernized by incorporating staff feedback and continuous quality improvement.
- Need educational supports/interventions and nutrition services for youth and families.
- Families need assistance with obtaining appropriate housing for reunification.
- Need to improve notification when youth are reassigned to another medical provider.
- Long waiting lists for reunification services causes delays in reuniting families.
- Services should encourage partnerships between foster family and birth families to continue to support the child and family. Biological parents should have the same access as foster parents to child care support, school needs and other financial support when children are reunified.

Transition-Age Youth

- Transition-age youth (ages 18-21) need more opportunities to develop independent living skills, such as vocational training, pursuing higher education, managing finances and securing housing.
- Support is needed for transitioning youth such as mentoring, peer supports, transitional housing, immigration assistance and driver's license assistance.
- Information on resources and services for transition-age youth is not always readily available. Independent living coordinators can sometimes be difficult to contact due to their busy schedules; increasing the number of coordinators could address this issue. Coordinators should

follow up to ensure youth understand and know where to access information.

- Information should be available in a central location. Youth should be provided a flash drive containing all relevant information.
- Every child who leaves out-of-home care has a transition meeting; KY SKY partners could be another resource if invited to these transition meetings.
- Youth should have a voice during meetings and conferences regarding their case and policy choices.

Supporting Biological Families & Foster Families

- DCBS needs to understand a family's dynamics and work closely with the family to prevent removals by putting in-home services in place when possible. Respite care or safe placements would be beneficial until prevention services can be put in the home to prevent removal.
- There should be more flexibility for biological parents working a case plan to be able to maintain a job and a stable home and still complete their case plan tasks.
- The high turnover rate among DCBS employees can result in case information not being relayed during the transition to other staff.
- Reduce the number of meetings by offering families the opportunity to meet all of their community treatment providers at one time.
- Foster parents would like to receive implicit bias training so they can better support youth in their home.
- When relatives are located late in the case, there are concerns about young children (birth to age 2) being removed from foster homes where they have formed bonds.

Courts, CFCRB & Legal Representation

- Adjudications and dispositions are not occurring in a timely manner in some areas of the state, causing delays in permanency hearings.
- Family Court is still needed throughout the state.
- Foster parents are still reporting that they are not being allowed in court due to misinformation and/or miscommunication.
- More interested party reviews should be held throughout the state. The CFCRB program has created a task force to examine increasing IPRs statewide.
- Biological families should be mandated to attend IPRs.
- There continues to be a lack of communication between guardians ad litem and foster parents.
- While participation has increased through virtual means, guardians ad litem and parent attorneys still do not attend most IPRs. It could benefit the children and parties for guardians ad litem and parent attorneys to attend.

CFCRB Overview by the Numbers

Out-of-Home Care Demographics

What are the ages of children in foster care?

In FY 2021, the youngest child reviewed by CFCRB volunteers was 1 month old and the oldest was 21 years old (due to extended commitment). The average age remained consistent at 10 years. Of the children reviewed by the CFCRB, those age 5 and younger remain the largest age group at 32%, with ages 11 to 15 at 24% and ages 6 to 10 at 22%. The age analysis is based on children who were in out-of-home care on June 30, 2021, and includes children who were released from the custody of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services anytime during the fiscal year.

What gender are children in out-of-home care?

The gender of children in out-of-home care is almost evenly split, with 51% male and 49% female.

What race are children in foster care?

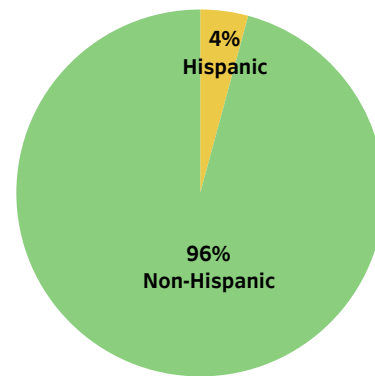
Of the children in foster care, 73% are Caucasian, 11% are African American, 5% are unable to be determined, fewer than 1% are other and 12% are multiracial. The other races include American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian and Native

Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. In addition, 4% of the children in foster care have Hispanic ethnicity.

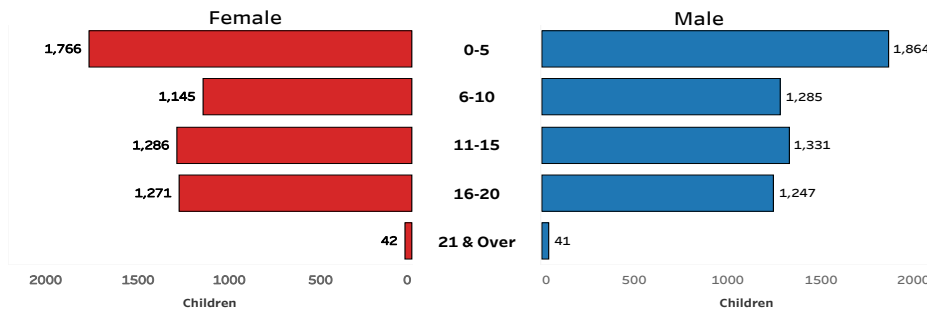
Black youth represent only 8.5% of Kentucky's population but 11% of children in foster care, demonstrating the overrepresentation of children of color in foster care. Our goal is to address disproportionality in the child welfare system by focusing on changes in policy and practice at specific contact points.

Note: In March 2018, the CATS system updated its race codes to allow the selection of multiple race types. Therefore, this only affects children who have entered care from March 2018 to the present.

Children in Foster Care by Ethnicity

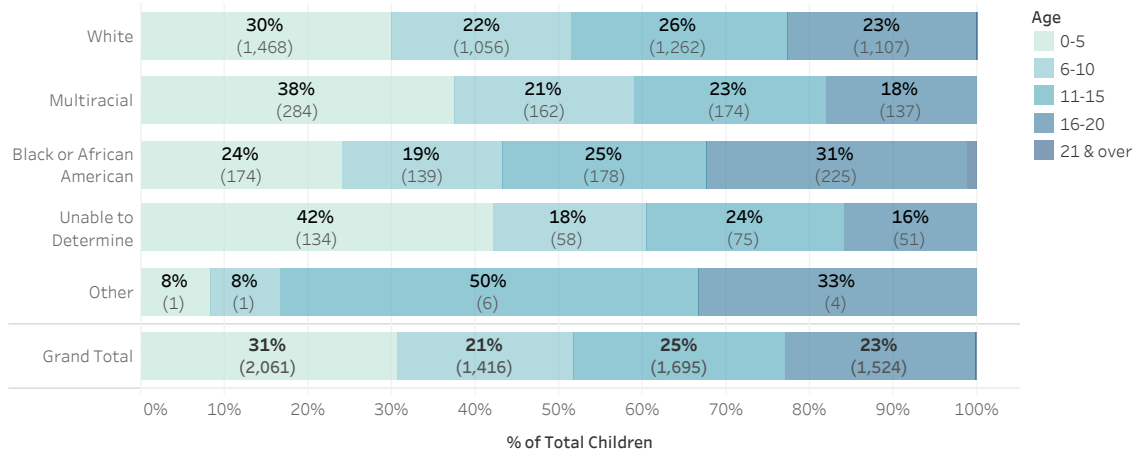


Children in Foster Care by Age and Gender



Children in Foster Care by Race and Age

Children Active in Care as of June 30, 2021



Time in Out-of-Home Care

What is the average length of stay by age group for children in out-of-home care?

Active children experienced an average length of stay of 30.2 months. Inactive children experienced an average length of stay of 24.9 months.

Active children describes those whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year and were still in care on June 30, 2021. Inactive children describes those whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year, but were released prior to June 30, 2021.

The overall average length of stay for FY 2021 was 28 months, which is an increase from the average length of stay of 23.9 months in FY 2020.

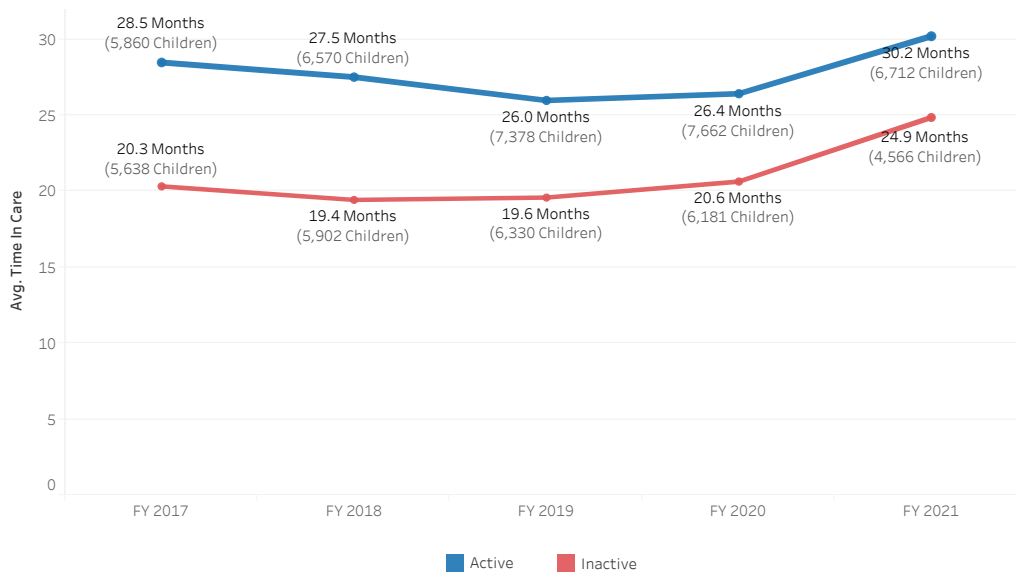
On average, Black children spend 32.2 months in care, which is 13% longer than the 28.6 months White children experience.

Children over age 16 continue to remain in care longer than younger children and are experiencing an average of 37.5 months in care compared with 16.9 months in care for children age 5 and younger.

It should be noted that in calculating the average length of stay, children who were in care less than 24 hours are counted as “zero” for the length of time in care. These are children who may have been in the process of being removed from the home when a suitable relative assumed custody of the child. When taking into account these zeros, it may actually skew the average to the lower end of the spectrum.

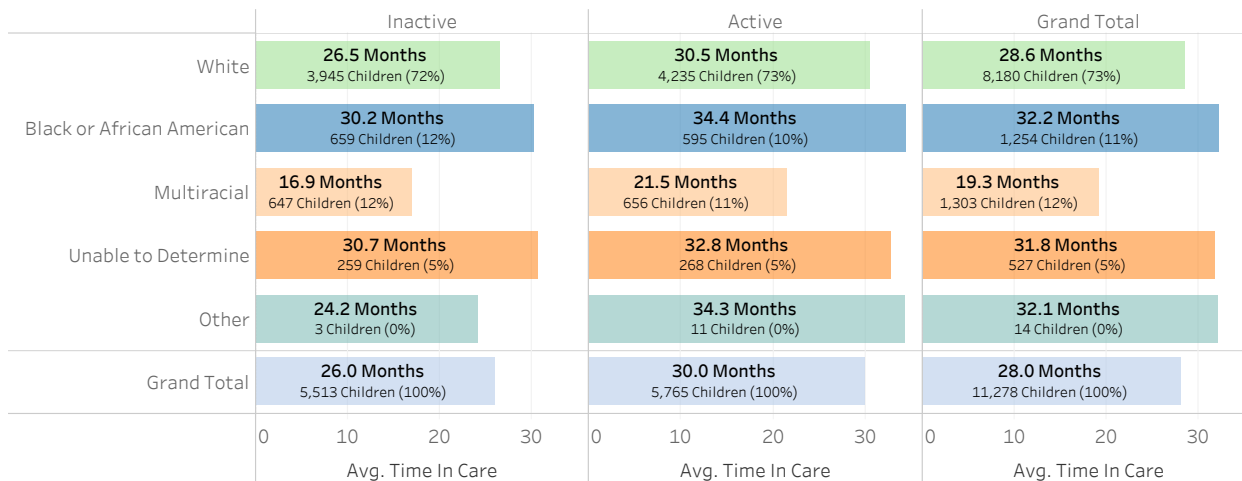
Note: The statistics captured in the charts below represent all children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021.

Children in Foster Care by Average Number of Months
FY 2017 - FY 2021



* Statistics captured in this chart represent all children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2021.
 * The term "active children" describes those children who were still in care at the end of each FY (June 30).
 * The term "inactive children" describes those whose cases were reviewed during fiscal year but were released from care prior to end of FY (June 30).

Children in Foster Care by Average Number of Months
FY 2021



Exiting Out-of-Home Care

Why are children released from out-of-home care?

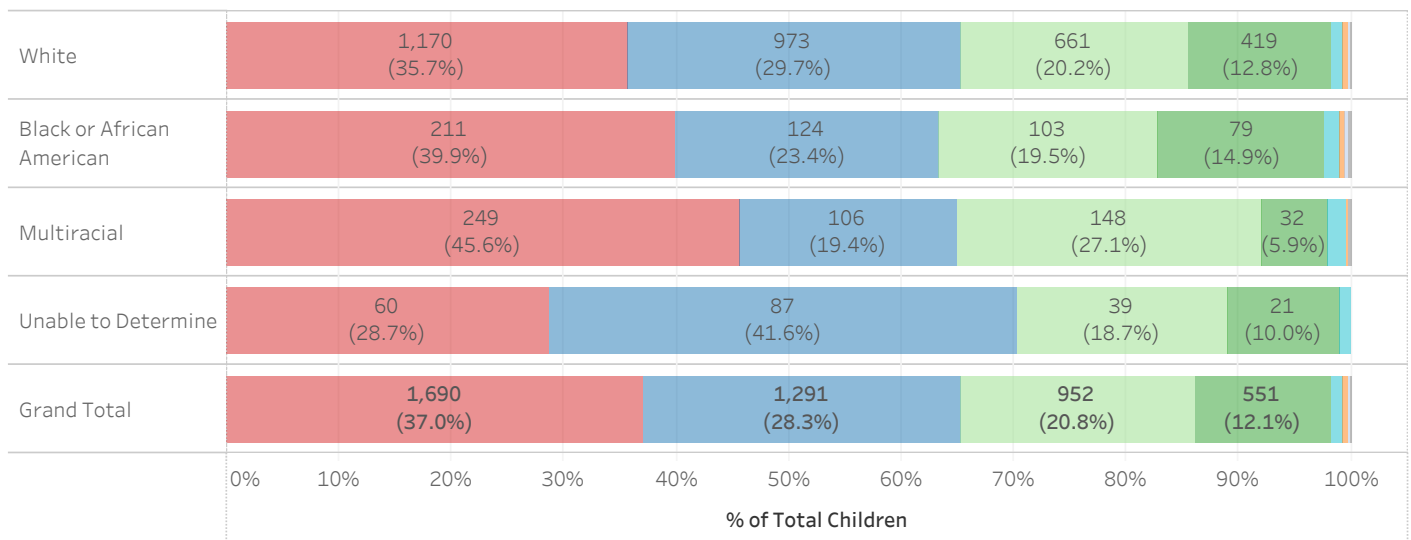
The majority of children – 37% – were released from care through reunification with parents or primary guardians.

The next largest group of children exiting care – 28% – was through adoption.

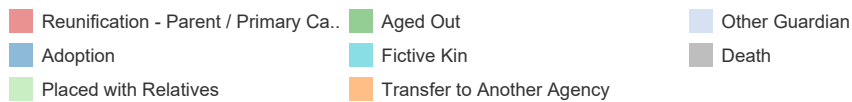
These percentages were consistent with FY 2020.



Children in Foster Care By Race & Release Type
FY 2021



*Other Race not included (see table below)



		Reunification - Parent / Primary Caretaker	Adoption	Placed with Relatives	Aged Out	Fictive Kin	Transfer to Another Agency	Other Guardian	Death	Grand Total
White	% of Children	35.7%	29.7%	20.2%	12.8%	1.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	100.0%
	Children	1,170	973	661	419	33	15	8	3	3,280
Black or African American	% of Children	39.9%	23.4%	19.5%	14.9%	1.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	100.0%
	Children	211	124	103	79	7	2	2	1	529
Multiracial	% of Children	45.6%	19.4%	27.1%	5.9%	1.6%	0.2%		0.2%	100.0%
	Children	249	106	148	32	9	1		1	546
Unable to Determine	% of Children	28.7%	41.6%	18.7%	10.0%	1.0%				100.0%
	Children	60	87	39	21	2				209
Other	% of Children		50.0%	50.0%						100.0%
	Children		1	1						2
Grand Total	% of Children	37.0%	28.3%	20.8%	12.1%	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	100.0%
	Children	1,690	1,291	952	551	51	18	10	5	4,566

Permanency Through Adoption

What percentage of children in out-of-home care were adopted?

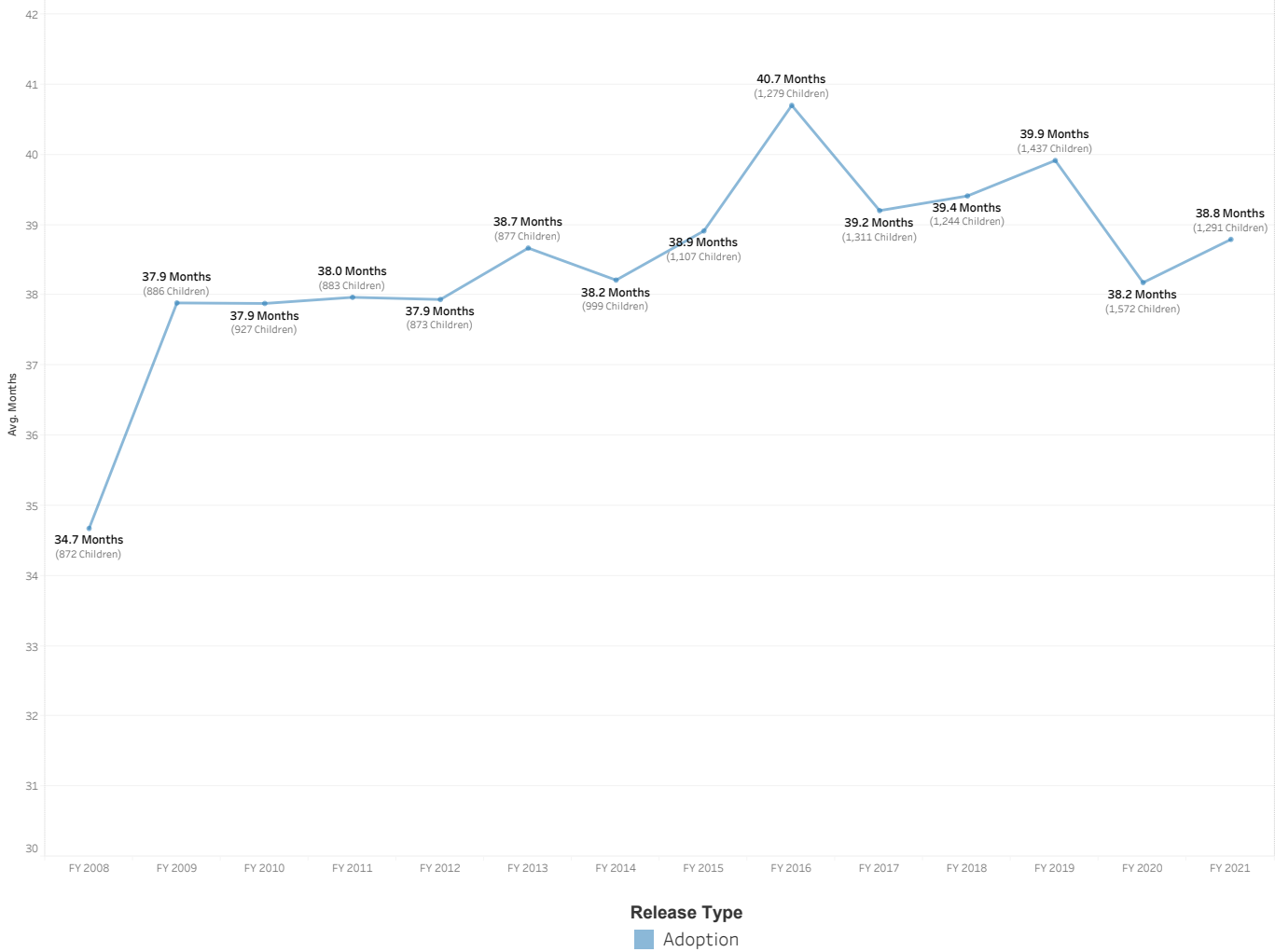
Of the children released from care in FY 2021, 28% achieved

permanency through adoption, a slight increase over 26% in FY 2020. Nationwide, the number of children released from care by adoption has steadily increased over the last decade.

Children who exited care because of a finalized adoption spent 38.8 months in care prior to adoption.

Average Number of Months to Final Adoption

FY 2008 - FY 2021



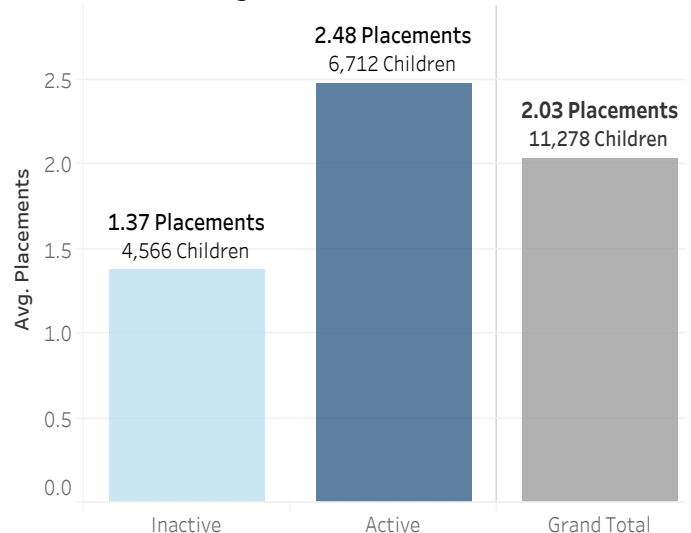
Placement Stability

What does fewer out-of-home placements mean for children in foster care?

Fewer placements create stability and lessen the trauma for children in care. Children who were still active as of June 30, 2021, experienced an average of 2.03 placements per commitment in FY 2021. This is in line with the federal expectation of no more than 2 placements until a child achieves permanency.

In FY 2021, 47 children experienced more than 3 moves in a 6-month time frame. Of these 47 children, 33 were still active as of June 30, 2021, and 14 had been released from care.

Average Placements Per Child



Profile of CFCRB Volunteers

Who are the CFCRB Volunteers?

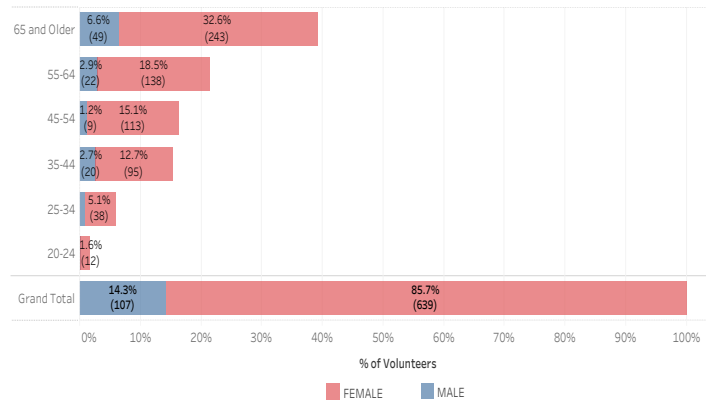
CFCRB volunteers come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, but all share a genuine concern for children and their welfare.

Of the 746 volunteers, 86% are female and 43% have backgrounds in education, medicine, law, social work and psychology. They range in age from 21 to 90, with an average age of 58. The average length of service is 7 years, which demonstrates their commitment to the children they serve.

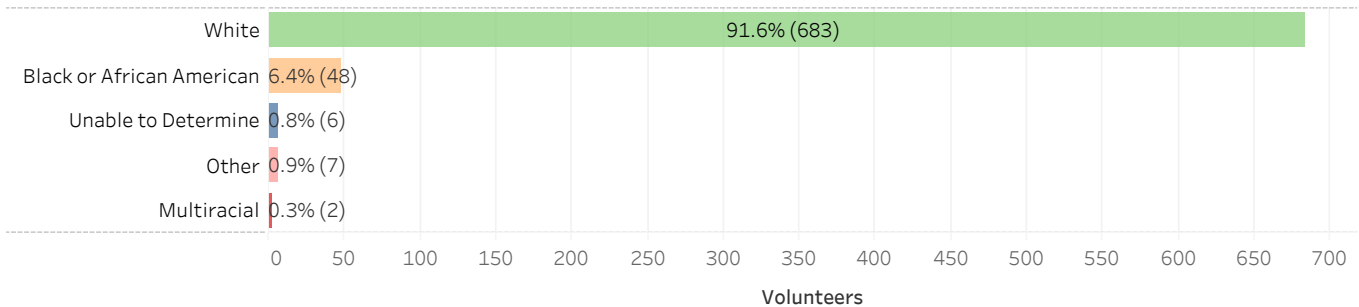
Of the volunteers, 92% are Caucasian, 6% are African American and .9% are considered other.

The CFCRB Diversity Committee continues to strive to increase the diversity of its volunteer base by actively recruiting in underrepresented populations.

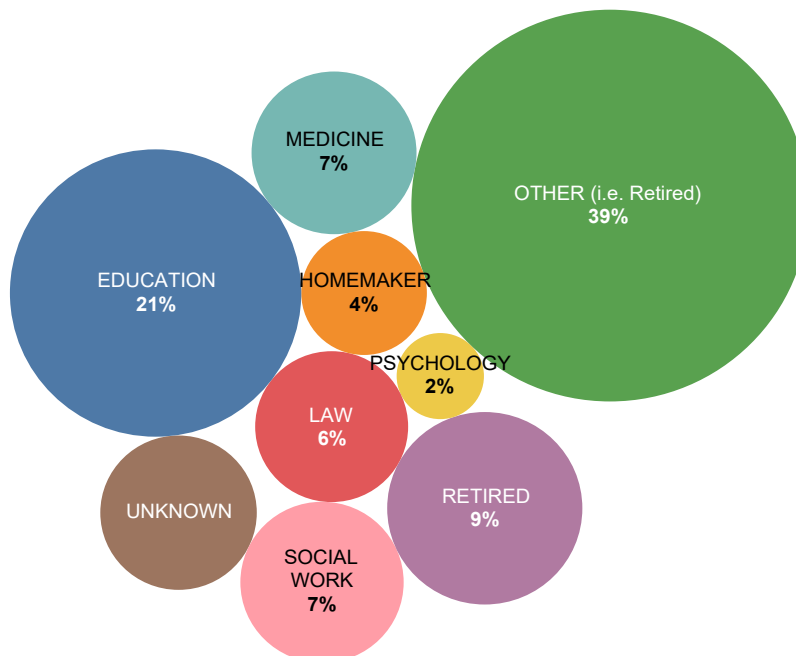
Volunteers by Age Group & Gender



Volunteers by Race



Volunteers by Profession



Interested party review process now used in 110 counties

Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers use two processes to review the cases of children in out-of-home care.

Case File Review. The CFCRB used the case file review when the program began in Kentucky in 1982. The case file review is a comprehensive evaluation of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' case file for the child. The review looks at progress made to alleviate out-of-home placement and compliance with case planning and court orders. The review also identifies barriers to permanency and solutions to address those barriers.

Interested Party Review. In 2007, some local boards began using the interested party review, an interactive process that involves CFCRB volunteers, parents, care providers, service providers, Department for Community Based Services personnel, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and attorneys for children and parents.

IPRs focuses on case plans for the parents and their child, and the progress being made to secure permanency for the child. After completing the mandatory review, the Family Services coordinator compiles a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations and submits it to the judge responsible for the case.

The use of IPR as the standard for reviewing cases has grown exponentially. Only 16% of CFCRB boards used IPR in its first year, compared with 78% in FY 2021. Today, 130 boards representing 110 counties now use IPR.

In FY 2021, CFCRB volunteers conducted 11,410 intensive reviews for 6,838 children, compared with 11,633 IPRs in FY 2020.

Note: A technical error caused a delay in exporting information from the TWIST database into CATS, which resulted in a reduction in the number of reviews for FY 2021. TWIST is the database used by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and CATS is the database used by the Administrative Office of the Courts to share data on children in out-of-home care.

In spite of a decline in the number of dependency, neglect and abuse case filings during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of IPRs remained stable from FY 2020 to FY 2021. This is a testament to the hard work and diligence of the CFCRB volunteers who participate in the IPR process.

The first chart provides a statewide total of case file and interested party reviews, while the second chart shows the number of reviews by county/local review boards.

Total CFCRB Reviews FY 2021

FY	IPR Review		Case File Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
FY 2021	11,410	6,838	7,730	5,287	19,140	11,278

CFCRB Reviews by County/Local Board FY 2021

Board Name	IPR Review		Case File Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
ADAIR	53	33	2	2	55	34
ALLEN	140	87	1	1	141	88
ANDERSON			79	44	79	44
BALLARD/CARLISLE	86	51			86	51
BARREN			218	156	218	156
BARREN IPR	101	64	7	7	108	70
BATH/MENIFEE			85	56	85	56
BELL			64	36	64	36
BOONE/GALLATIN			194	148	194	148
BOURBON			60	34	60	34
BOYD	4	4	280	176	284	176
BOYLE IPR	131	80	5	5	136	81
BREATHITT	75	49	26	26	101	62
BRECKINRIDGE	100	63	1	1	101	64
BULLITT	118	84	17	14	135	87
BULLITT B	131	81	16	15	147	85
BUTLER	190	114	8	8	198	122
CALDWELL/LYON	49	30			49	30
CALLOWAY	155	95			155	95
CAMPBELL 1			121	93	121	93
CAMPBELL 2	3	3	147	97	150	97
CAMPBELL 4 IPR	85	49	5	5	90	50

CFCRB Reviews by County/Local Board FY 2021

Board Name	IPR Review		Case File Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
CAMPBELL B			1	1	1	1
CARROLL			116	71	116	71
CARTER IPR	104	64	39	39	143	92
CASEY	19	14	1	1	20	14
CHRISTIAN	169	110			169	110
CHRISTIAN B IPR	180	107			180	107
CLARK			211	131	211	131
CLARK IPR	119	69	4	4	123	70
CLAY IPR	107	61	39	39	146	80
CLINTON IPR	38	20	2	2	40	22
CRITTENDEN	76	43			76	43
DAVISS A	65	43			65	43
DAVISS B	186	122			186	122
DAVISS C	128	78			128	78
EDMONSON	53	34			53	34
ELLIOTT/MORGAN IPR	99	54	19	19	118	67
ESTILL IPR	91	52	1	1	92	52
FAYETTE 1 IPR	138	73	4	3	142	74
FAYETTE 2 IPR	83	48	8	8	91	54
FAYETTE 4 IPR	66	38	23	21	89	48
FAYETTE A			144	78	144	78
FAYETTE B			49	29	49	29
FAYETTE C	4	4	85	55	89	55
FAYETTE D			134	76	134	76
FAYETTE E IPR	89	54	3	3	92	57
FAYETTE F IPR	49	30	5	4	54	33
FAYETTE G IPR	48	31	15	13	63	40
FAYETTE H	1	1	61	40	62	40
FAYETTE I IPR	85	46	13	13	98	53
FAYETTE I PAPER BOARD	1	1	26	19	27	19
FAYETTE J			91	56	91	56
FAYETTE L	1	1	82	54	83	54
FLEMING/ROBERTSON	8	8	61	41	69	42
FLOYD	144	82	29	26	173	95
FRANKLIN	1	1	264	167	265	168
FRANKLIN IPR	9	9	15	11	24	13
FULTON/HICKMAN	51	31			51	31
GARRARD IPR	40	30	18	18	58	41
GRANT			106	68	106	68
GRAVES	131	78			131	78
GRAVES B	17	14			17	14
GRAYSON	231	130			231	130
Grayson B	1	1			1	1
GREEN	7	4			7	4
GREENUP/LEWIS IPR	116	80	17	17	133	85
HANCOCK	35	19			35	19
HARDIN A	187	126			187	126
HARDIN B	204	133			204	133
HARDIN C	220	138			220	138
HARDIN D	167	124			167	124
HARLAN IPR	49	22	7	7	56	26
HARRISON/NICHOLAS IPR	109	77	54	45	163	90
HART	79	48	10	10	89	56
HENDERSON	137	77			137	77
HENRY IPR	47	28	6	6	53	29
HOPKINS	150	87			150	87
JACKSON IPR			99	58	99	58
JEFFERSON 1	5	5	288	144	293	145
JEFFERSON 2			237	137	237	137
JEFFERSON 3	1	1	184	98	185	98
JEFFERSON 4			234	141	234	141
JEFFERSON 5	93	59	13	12	106	62
JEFFERSON 5A	122	63	7	7	129	67
JEFFERSON 6			251	142	251	142
JEFFERSON 7	96	64	29	27	125	75
JEFFERSON 7A	77	55	17	15	94	56
JEFFERSON 8	102	62	8	8	110	63
JEFFERSON 8A	93	53	17	13	110	63
JEFFERSON 9	1	1	232	135	233	135
JEFFERSON 10	2	2	241	141	243	142
JEFFERSON 10 IPR	62	37	12	12	74	43
JESSAMINE IPR	173	107	33	30	206	120

CFCRB Reviews by County/Local Board FY 2021

Board Name	IPR Review		Case File Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
JOHNSON IPR	105	58	20	19	125	73
KENTON 1 IPR	66	45	11	11	77	47
KENTON 2			152	110	152	110
KENTON 3-Campbell			167	117	167	117
KENTON 4 IPR	56	33	11	11	67	43
KENTON 5 IPR	53	33	9	9	62	35
KENTON 6	1	1	277	215	278	216
KENTON 7-Campbell	2	2	193	141	195	143
KENTON 8 IPR	68	38	13	13	81	42
KENTON C			1	1	1	1
KENTON STATUS IPR	38	25	11	11	49	28
KNOTT/PERRY IPR	55	35	14	14	69	40
KNOX IPR	115	63	40	40	155	89
LARUE	23	17			23	17
LAUREL IPR	244	134	118	116	362	205
LAWRENCE IPR	67	39	11	11	78	47
LEE/OWSLEY IPR	21	14	13	13	34	22
LESLIE	20	14	1	1	21	14
LETCHER	28	21	17	13	45	24
LINCOLN IPR	55	33	31	31	86	60
LIVINGSTON	24	14			24	14
LOGAN	122	73			122	73
MADISON A IPR	203	145	38	38	241	161
MADISON B			186	127	186	127
MADISON C			180	119	180	119
MAGOFFIN IPR	51	37	19	18	70	51
MARION/WASHINGTON IPR	62	32	15	15	77	40
MARSHALL	63	37			63	37
Marshall B	61	34			61	34
MARTIN IPR	54	34	14	14	68	38
MASON/BRACKEN	1	1	91	71	92	71
MCCRACKEN A IPR	108	69			108	69
MCCRACKEN B	84	52			84	52
MCCREARY	162	79	34	34	196	94
MCLEAN	36	27			36	27
MEADE	208	116			208	116
MERCER IPR	96	61	2	2	98	61
METCALFE	34	19	6	5	40	21
MONROE/CUMBERLAND	80	49	7	7	87	51
MONTGOMERY IPR	185	115	17	17	202	119
MUHLENBERG	84	48			84	48
NELSON	68	44			68	44
OHIO	244	145			244	145
OLDHAM IPR	55	34	20	20	75	39
OWEN			58	33	58	33
PENDLETON IPR	57	35	2	2	59	35
PERRY	10	10	67	47	77	48
PIKE IPR	163	103	32	29	195	118
POWELL IPR	104	62	18	17	122	69
PULASKI IPR	108	80	44	44	152	101
PULASKI IPR B	31	31	6	6	37	34
ROCKCASTLE IPR	48	26	23	23	71	41
ROWAN A IPR	61	41			61	41
ROWAN B IPR	58	37	1	1	59	37
RUSSELL	100	59	32	30	132	79
SCOTT			179	122	179	122
SHELBY			121	81	121	81
SHELBY IPR	14	10	12	8	26	12
SIMPSON	51	31			51	31
SPENCER IPR	19	12	10	10	29	19
TAYLOR	33	22	17	17	50	31
TODD	67	43			67	43
TRIGG	43	22			43	22
TRIMBLE IPR	36	25	13	13	49	30
UNION	98	62			98	62
WARREN A IPR	105	65			105	65
WARREN B	114	65	3	3	117	68
WARREN C			188	116	188	116
WARREN C IPR	77	50			77	50
WARREN D IPR	117	72			117	72
WARREN E IPR	77	47			77	47
WAYNE	57	39	20	20	77	46
WEBSTER	45	29			45	29
WHITLEY IPR	166	91	53	51	219	122
WOLFE	62	41	18	17	80	46
WOODFORD			73	45	73	45

Working together, CFCRB volunteers do much good



*Rachel Bingham, Director
Office of Statewide Programs
Administrative Office of the Courts*

I continue to be impressed by the resiliency of our CFCRB volunteers. In the midst of so many challenges, they remain undeterred in their efforts to advocate for our most vulnerable population.

As the COVID-19 pandemic entered its second year, our volunteers kept up the pace, reviewing cases for thousands of children in out-of-home care while taking action to address racial inequality in the child welfare system.

I appreciate the hard work and dedication shown by our volunteers and staff.

“Alone we do so little, together we can do so much.”

— Helen Keller

Child and Family Services Reviews analyze Kentucky’s child welfare system

The Children’s Bureau in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services conducts periodic reviews to assess how well states have conformed to federal child welfare requirements. The Children’s Bureau also helps state child welfare agencies identify program strengths and areas that need improvement.

The Child and Family Services Reviews are based on statewide data indicators that provide performance information on a state’s child safety and permanency outcomes.

These regular reviews ensure that officials with Kentucky’s child welfare system remain aware of areas needing attention so they can focus their efforts and oversight on improving outcomes for children and families.

The Children’s Bureau conducted Round 3 reviews in all 50 states between 2015-2018 and Kentucky rated better

than the national performance on some data indicators and below the national performance on others.

Kentucky fared better than national standards in these categories:

- Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care.
- Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 or more months.

Kentucky rated lower than national standards in these categories:

- Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months.
- Reentry to foster care in 12 months.

Kentucky and other states are preparing for Round 4 of the CFSR to begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2022.



A HEART FOR CHILDREN

Giving a voice to our youngest citizens takes compassion and concern for the welfare of others. CFCRB volunteers explain their devotion to this cause.



Ann Young, Oldham IPR Board

I became a CFCRB volunteer because I was looking for more ways to advocate for at-risk children in our community. Being a resident of my board's county, I felt a responsibility to help ensure that these children receive the best possible oversight. My journey with the CFCRB has been personally rewarding as I've witnessed the joys of permanency for many children. I've been encouraged by the hard-working parents, relatives and professionals involved in cases.



Michael Williams, Kenton 8 Board

I was fortunate to have a father who encouraged me and coaches and volunteers who sacrificed their time to teach me lessons of value beyond the playing field. They stressed that if someone acquires knowledge and talents that might help others, then one had a moral duty to volunteer. In my 40+ year career as an attorney, I was a prosecutor in DNA litigations and a guardian ad litem. Because of those interactions, I bring a unique perspective to the CFCRB. I believe not offering my time/experience would betray those who gave their time for me.



Larry Miller, Boyd/Carter IPR Board & Greenup/Lewis IPR Board

I volunteer because these boards are unbiased and make every effort to make recommendations to successfully reunite families. The CFCRB program means so much to the children and families. It is wonderful to witness some families make progress and have a successful reunification. On the other hand, when families aren't reunited our foster care/adoption programs make it possible for children to find forever homes. Children are the future of our nation and this is one way we can help them be productive citizens and break generational cycles of neglect and abuse.



Gladys Williams, Chair of Hopkins IPR Board

Serving our children in care is my way of ensuring families and children have every opportunity to obtain happiness and success in their lives. Through the interested party reviews, I strive to put what is in the best interests of the child first when making recommendations to the local judge. I feel that being on the board is a calling for me. I do appreciate being a part of the Hopkins County CFCRB Board.



Alisha Campbell, Hardin D IPR Board

I decided to volunteer because I wanted to do more for my community and I have always been an advocate for children and families. The children and families that we serve are the heart and soul of Kentucky. Their lives are impacted daily by the decisions our boards help make. The board I meet with is truly the highlight of my month. I see these families through the lens of hope and opportunity for success. I hope that lives are changed and transformed for the better and that families can have the support they need to help the children of our communities thrive.



Lark Buckman, Chair of Union IPR Board

During my career with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and Department of Child Services, I became familiar with families who struggled to meet basic needs and children who suffered abuse and neglect. Because of this experience, my wife and I became foster parents. After retiring and moving back to Kentucky, I joined the Union County CFCRB. Positively influencing a child's life by volunteering brings me great satisfaction. Seeing the impact on a child who returns to parents or moves successfully into adulthood is a reward that can't be matched.



Ashlie Smoot-Baker, Chair of Henry IPR Board

Being a volunteer is not only gratifying but extremely important to me. My interest in helping children and families began while studying Child Development & Family Relations at Kentucky State University. After graduation, I was introduced to the CFCRB by my college professor. I will always be proud of helping make decisions for children in foster care to ensure that they are safe. I hope to encourage other young adults and minorities to join the CFCRB to help make a difference as well. My passion is to help others and I believe I do that by being a CFCRB member!

ADVOCATES

The Citizen Foster Care Review Board owes its success to the 746 volunteers who advocate for Kentucky's children. We pay tribute to several of these longtime child welfare champions.



MARY FORDER

**Boone/Gallatin County IPR Board
35 Years of Service**

I have been serving on the Boone/Gallatin Board since 1986. I continue to be actively involved by working closely with our local judge and coordinator to complete reviews. Though this last year has presented challenges, I strive to remain dedicated and passionate about the children in out-of-home care.



GELINE PORTER

**Warren County B IPR Board
24 Years of Service**

My path to CFCRB evolved from many things. I volunteered in other capacities with VISTA and CASA, then found CFCRB through advertising. Eventually, this brought me to becoming a foster parent as well. I volunteer because of all those children I have worked with and it's a way for me to help them. Age doesn't matter in volunteering and it requires so little of me to do it. I see it as a requirement for me since I have had so many advantages in my life and it is a small way to give back.



VICKIE BATTS

**Fulton/Hickman County IPR Board
22 Years of Service**

I have a background in nursing and social work, so serving and helping others has been a part of my life. That's why I joined the CFCRB for Fulton and Hickman counties in 1999. I knew I wanted to be a voice for children who were in out-of-home care and experiencing difficult circumstances. The interested party reviews are helpful as they bring all of the parties together and we get a better understanding of how the child is doing. The children's success stories are heartwarming and make it all worthwhile!



RICHARD EADS

**Bourbon County IPR Board
17 Years of Service**

I am grateful to have served on the Bourbon County Board since 2005. So often, children's voices go unheard and the board can aid children in having their voice heard in the court system. CFCRB volunteers can assist families and children in out-of-home care by reviewing their cases and providing recommendations that focus on the child's best interests.



MARGARET CADLE

**Fayette County H IPR Board
35 Years of Service**

I developed an awareness of at-risk children's needs during my career in education. In 1986, I joined the CFCRB in Fayette County. As a veteran volunteer, I have seen the program grow and improve to meet the needs of families and children. I have learned so much from my time with the CFCRB and the experience has been invaluable.



KATHIE HARRIS

**Harlan County IPR Board
35 Years of Service**

In 1986, I had no idea that I would be serving on the Harlan County Board 35 years later. As a young school psychologist, I was fortunate to have an employer who allowed me time to volunteer. Despite working late and spending time away from my family, I was committed to helping children achieve permanency. Volunteering for the CFCRB has been one of the most rewarding decisions of my life.

SUCCESS STORIES

Success can be measured in many ways and CFCRB volunteers celebrate when good things happen to children in out-of home care.

Taylor County

Independent Living, Education and Hard Work Lead to Bright Future

The Taylor County IPR Board reviewed a youth who entered out-of-home care when his grandfather/caretaker was placed in a nursing home. The youth was placed in a private child care setting where he continued to maintain good grades and graduate early from high school. When he turned 18, he extended his commitment for the purposes of his education. He initially attended college, but is now considering transferring to a technical school. He is in weekly contact with his grandfather, obtaining an apartment through independent living, studying for his driver's license and working two jobs. He continues to receive regular therapy and medication management. The board is proud of his work ethic and the initiative that will help him become a successful adult.

Daviess County

Adopted Foster Child Thriving and Headed to College

Sixteen years ago, when IPR was in its early stages, the Daviess IPR Board reviewed the case of a baby girl. The child's foster parents attended the review and later adopted the child. Fast forward to 2021, when the child's adoptive father contacted the CFCRB office in Daviess County to inquire about college benefits for children adopted through the foster care system. His daughter, now 17 and a high school senior, is excelling in school and has already been accepted at Murray State University. As he said, he enjoys bragging on her.

Christian County

Daughter Reconnects With Father and Gets a New Home in Alaska

Four years ago, the Christian IPR Board began reviewing the case of a teenage girl whose mother left the state after the child entered foster care and informed the Department for Community Based Services that she wanted to voluntarily terminate her parental rights. The mother prevented communication with the child's father, who lived in Alaska, and even defied a court order to provide information on the father. They finally reunited as a result of the father trying to locate his daughter and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services trying to locate the father. In the winter of 2021, her father and paternal grandmother came to Kentucky to take her back to her new home in Alaska, where she is now a senior in high school.

Fayette County

Overcoming Barriers to Reunite Mother and Children

The Fayette E IPR Board reviewed a case of seven children removed due to the younger children being left at home unsupervised. With issues stemming from cultural differences and language barriers, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services connected the family with Kentucky Refugee Ministries. With the help of KRM, the mother was able to obtain interpreting services to help her enroll the children in day care and other programs. The Department for Community Based Services located a family that could take placement of all seven children and they were reunified with their mother permanently in July 2021.

Calloway County

Older Sister Adopts Younger Sister and Creates Loving Family

The Calloway County IPR board has been reviewing the case of a 12-year-old girl, who was removed from her mother. Shortly after she entered foster care, her half-sister came forward to serve as her placement. DCBS staff initially had concerns as the older sister was only 19 at the time and a college student. The staff agreed to schedule a visit between the two girls and their relationship blossomed. The level-headed older sister participated in foster parent training and became a foster parent for her younger sister. Then in 2021, at age 22, the older sister adopted her younger sister and that is how the bond between two siblings created a loving home.

Kenton County

Academic Support Leads to Harvard Scholarship

The Kenton Status IPR Board reviewed a youth who had been in out-of-home care for most of her childhood before entering independent living and extending her commitment while in college. Her foster parents and the Department for Community Based Services supported her academic pursuits, leading to her being awarded a full scholarship to Harvard!



Training programs help volunteers stay current

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides a robust training program to help CFCRB volunteers enhance their effectiveness as child advocates. During FY 2021, volunteers earned 2,370 hours of continued education and 364 hours of initial trainings. The programs were offered virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. These trainings included:

- CFCRB regional trainings
- Initial and interested party review dual-track trainings
- Chair/vice chair trainings
- Technical trainings for secure documents, forms, Zoom and Microsoft Teams
- Legal trainings for dependency, neglect and abuse cases
- Trainings on children's issues approved by local chairs

2021 Regional Trainings

The CFCRB conducted regional trainings virtually in April and May to give volunteers their six hours of required annual continuing education.

Part 1 of the two-part series focused on the need for cultural humility by dissecting how culture impacts our responses to each other and how to better understand our cultural identity.

Pastor Edward L. Palmer Sr., a certified diversity trainer, facilitated a panel discussion with former foster care youth. He asked for their cultural perspective of the child welfare system and their advice on how CFCRB volunteers can address and share with the courts

the needs around race and culture of the children they review.

Part 2 provided an introduction to Aetna's Supporting Kentucky Youth Program, which offers comprehensive services to children in the foster care system. In addition, a panel of volunteers from Tennessee's foster care review boards demonstrated how motivational interviewing can be used in an IPR to improve the quality of reviews for children in out-of-home care.

Annual State Board Meeting

The CFCRB State Board held its annual meeting virtually for the first time, with 51 chairs and vice-chairs attending via Zoom on Nov. 7, 2020.

Marta Miranda-Straub, commissioner for the Department for Community Based Services, presented the advanced chair/vice chair training program. She discussed how the pandemic has impacted DCBS practices, including lessons learned and recommendations on how to improve child welfare services going forward.

She also explained the importance of incorporating a culture of safety, humility and trauma-informed care into the work of the CFCRB. She said that the five pillars of building a 21st century DCBS are equity and social justice; trauma and resilience; economic supports; health; and operations, implementation and evaluation.

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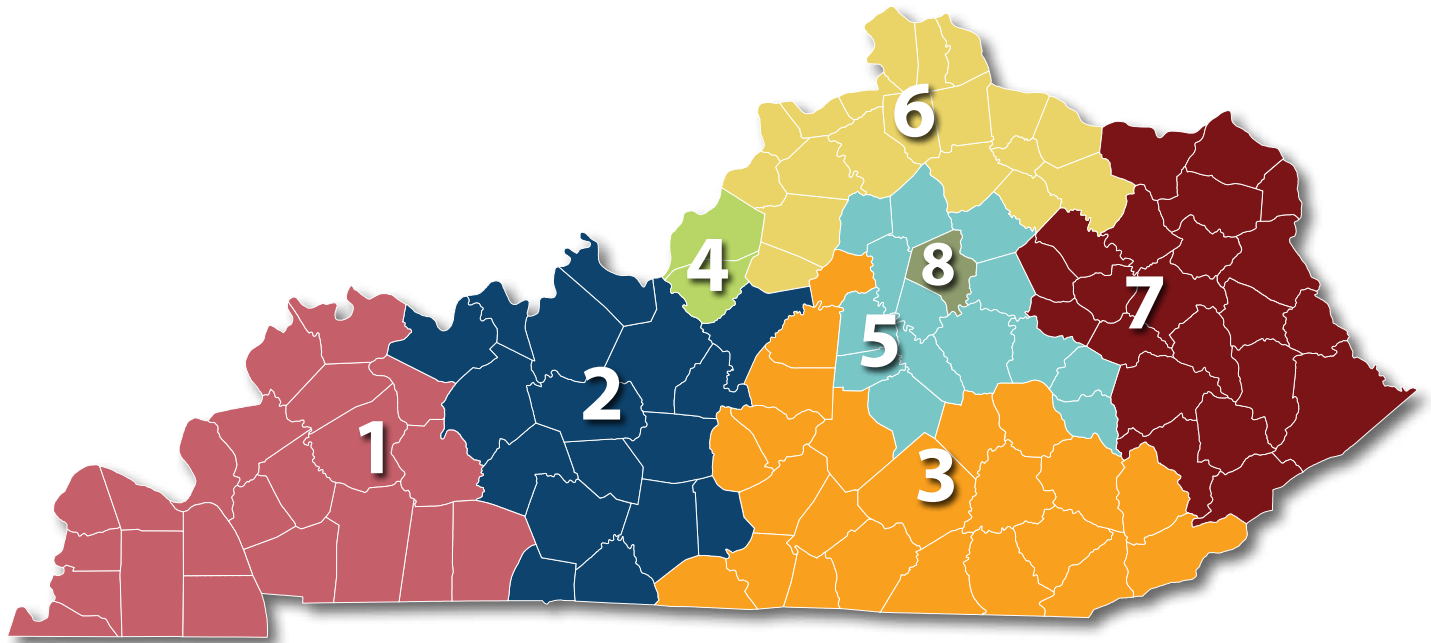
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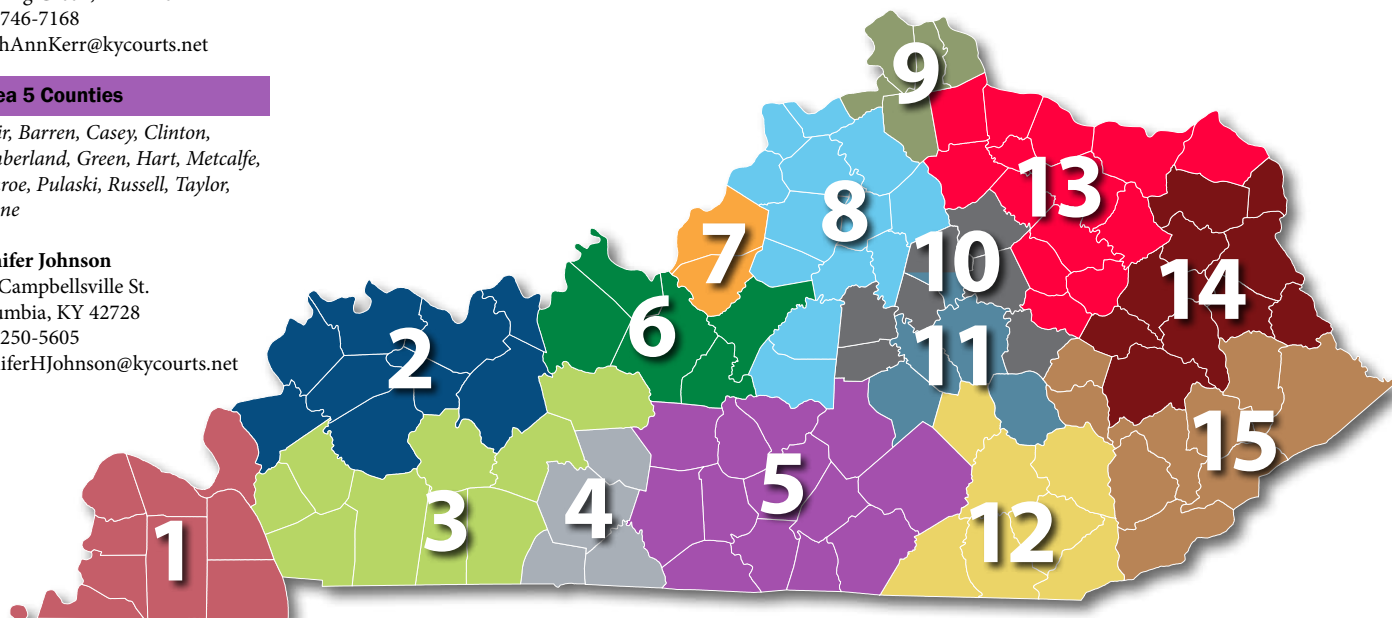
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