



Child Welfare Outcomes 2010 – 2014

Report to Congress



SAFETY

PERMANENCY

WELL-BEING



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau



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Executive Summary

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report is created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to meet requirements of Section 203(a) of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA).¹ ASFA created Section 479A of the Social Security Act (the Act) to require HHS to issue an annual report that assesses state performance in operating child protection and child welfare programs under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.² *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998* was the first report created in the Child Welfare Outcomes series of reports. The present report, *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014*, is the 15th report since the series' inception.

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report provides information on national performance as well as the performance of individual states in seven outcome categories.³ Prior to the first report, HHS identified these outcomes in close consultation with state and local child welfare agency administrators, child advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, state legislators, and other experts in the child welfare field. The outcomes reflect a consensus of these groups regarding important performance objectives for child welfare practice. The seven national outcomes established by HHS through this consultation process are:

- Outcome 1:** Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect
- Outcome 2:** Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- Outcome 3:** Increase permanency for children in foster care
- Outcome 4:** Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry
- Outcome 5:** Reduce time in foster care to adoption
- Outcome 6:** Increase placement stability
- Outcome 7:** Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

In addition to reporting on state performance in these outcome categories, this report also includes findings of analyses conducted across states and across time. Data for most of the measures in this report come from two national child welfare-related data systems—the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report presents data on child welfare-related contextual factors relevant to understanding and interpreting state performance on the outcome measures. Below is a summary of fiscal year (FY) 2014 data for these contextual factors.⁴

Characteristics of child victims⁵

- During 2014, approximately 702,000 children were confirmed to be victims of maltreatment.⁶ The overall national child victim rate was 9.4 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.⁷ State child victim rates varied dramatically, ranging from 1.2 child victims per 1,000 children to 22.9 child victims per 1,000 children.⁸

Foster care information overview

- Nationally, there were approximately 415,000 children in foster care on the last day of 2014. During that year, an estimated 260,000 children entered foster care, and 238,000 children exited foster care. Among the states, the foster

Additional demographic data about child victims, including age, race, and ethnicity can be found on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

¹ See appendix A for the current specifications of Section 479A of the Social Security Act, as created by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 and amended by P.L. 112-34 and P.L. 113-183. The Children's Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families, HHS, is responsible for this report.

² The Title IV-E agency is the state agency authorized to use federal Title IV-E funds to support foster care, adoption assistance, and kinship guardianship assistance. Title IV-E has been amended on several occasions to provide federal funding to support foster care, adoption, and kinship guardian assistance. Title IV-B provides preventative and protective services for children. For a more detailed understanding of the history and changes over time, please see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/title-iv-e-legislation-policy>.

³ In this report, the designation of "state" includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure.

⁴ Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for federal fiscal year 2014 (October 1, 2013–September 30, 2014).

⁵ This report uses a unique count for child victims, which tallies a child only once regardless of the number of times he or she was found to be a victim during the reporting year.

⁶ For the purposes of this report, a victim is a child for whom the state determined at least one maltreatment incident was substantiated or indicated, and a disposition of substantiated, indicated, or "alternative response victim" was assigned for a child in a specific report. This includes a child who died, and the death was confirmed to be the result of child abuse and neglect. A child may be a victim in one report and a nonvictim in another report. It is important to note that the Child Welfare Outcomes Report uses the total reported number of child victims as opposed to a national estimate of child victims, which often is reported in the Child Maltreatment Report. The total number of victims reported in this report is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

⁷ The national child victim rate is calculated by dividing the total number of child victims (702,208) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS data (74,356,370) and multiplying by 1,000.

⁸ This calculation includes children under the age of 18.

⁸ A state's rate of child victims is defined as the number of child victims reported to NCANDS per 1,000 children in the state's population.

care entry rate ranged from 1.5 children per 1,000 to 9.8 children per 1,000 in a state's population.⁹

- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of children in care on the last day of the FY decreased by 18.8 percent, from 511,000 to 415,000.¹⁰ The number of children in foster care hovered around 400,000 from 2010 through 2013 but increased to 415,000 in 2014.
- Nationally, 238,000 children exited foster care in 2014. Of these children, 204,000 (86 percent) were discharged to a permanent home (i.e., were discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship).

Longer range AFCARS data show that, between FY 2005 and 2014, the number of children in care on the last day of the FY decreased by 18.8 percent, from 511,000 to 415,000.

Additional child welfare-related context data is presented on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site, available at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

STATE PERFORMANCE ON OUTCOME MEASURES

This report includes a synopsis of key findings on the 12 measures established to assess performance on the seven national outcomes identified above, displayed in table 1. These measures are described in detail in appendix B.

All national medians for outcome measures referenced in this executive summary include only those states for which adequate data are available for 2010 through 2014. Tables of these medians can be found at the end of this executive summary.¹¹

Change in state performance over time is assessed by calculating a percent change in performance on the measures.¹² Consistent with HHS's historical approach to the analyses in these reports, a percent change of 5.0 or greater in either direction (i.e., positive or negative) is used as a general indicator that meaningful change in performance on the outcome measures occurred. Therefore, for purposes of the analyses presented in this report, if the percent change in performance from 2010 to 2014 was less than 5.0 in either direction, the determination is that there was "no change" in performance.

Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect

- In 2014, state performance varied considerably with regard to the percentage of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period (measure 1.1; range = 0.7 to 13.9 percent; median = 4.9 percent).
- States with higher victim rates tended to have higher maltreatment recurrence rates within a 6-month period (Pearson's $r=.66$).¹³ In addition, consistent with previous reports, states with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect (as opposed to other forms of maltreatment) also had some tendency to have a relatively high percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's $r=.45$).
- Performance with regard to recurrence of child maltreatment (measure 1.1) showed little change between 2010 and 2014. The median went from 5.0 percent in 2010 to 4.9 percent in 2014, a 2.7 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure). Twenty-two states improved their performance on this measure, compared with the 21 states that showed a decline.

There is a moderate positive correlation between higher rates of child victims of neglect and higher rates of maltreatment recurrence.

Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care

- During 2014, state performance regarding the maltreatment of children while in foster care (measure 2.1) ranged from 0.00 to 1.42 percent, with a median of 0.27 percent.
- Between 2010 and 2014, national performance with regard to the maltreatment of children in foster care (measure 2.1) generally improved. Twenty-two states improved in performance between 2010 and 2014, while 16 declined in performance. The national median exhibited a decline from .32 in 2010 to .25 in 2014, an overall decline of 21.4 percent (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure).

⁹ Rate of entry is calculated by dividing the total number of children entering foster care in a state by the total child population in that state and multiplying by 1,000 [(N entering FC/child population) x 1,000].

¹⁰ For more information, see *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2005–FY 2014* on the Children's Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>. The data used in *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2005–FY 2014* were updated as of July 2015.

¹¹ In the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, two separate national medians are computed for each measure for 2014. In the 2014 Range of State Performance tables, national medians are calculated using data from all states that had adequate data available for 2014 only. However, when looking at performance over time, a separate national median is calculated for 2014 that includes only data from the states that had adequate data available for all the relevant fiscal years (2010 through 2014). This is done to provide a more accurate calculation of change over time. Therefore, the number of states (N) included in each of these calculations may vary, and these two medians may vary slightly.

¹² Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.0 percent in 2010 and 4.9 percent in 2014, so the formula is $[(4.9-5.0)/5.0] \times 100 = 2.0$ percent decrease.

¹³ The strength of relationships in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports is assessed using correlation coefficients, specifically Pearson's r , which can range in value from -1 to $+1$.

Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care

- In 2014, states were fairly successful in achieving a permanent home for all children exiting foster care (measure 3.1, median = 89.0 percent). However, states were less successful in achieving permanent homes for children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability (measure 3.2, median = 78.4 percent) and even less successful in finding permanent homes for children exiting foster care who entered care when they were older than age 12 (measure 3.3, median = 63.9 percent).
- In about half of states, 20 percent or more of the children emancipated from foster care were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care (measure 3.4).

Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry

- The 2014 data suggest that, in many states, a majority of children discharged to reunification were reunified in a timely manner. Across states, the median percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months was 69.2 percent (measure 4.1).
- Between 2010 and 2014, more states declined in performance (14 states) than improved (9 states) related to achieving timely reunifications.
- In 2014, 7.5 percent of children entering foster care were reentering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption

- In 2014, all but a few states struggled to achieve timely adoptions within 12 months of entering care. Across states, the median percentage of adoptions occurring within 12 months of entering care was 4.1 percent. Moreover, 61 percent of states demonstrated a decline in performance between 2010 and 2014, while only 36 percent of states improved in achieving timely adoptions within 12 months.
- The median percentage of adoptions occurring at least 12 but less than 24 months from entering care is much higher, at 30.3 percent. Sixty percent of states (27 states) demonstrated improved performance in this indicator from 2010 to 2014.

Outcome 6: Increase placement stability

- In this report, adequate placement stability is defined as limiting the number of placement settings for a child to no more than two for a single foster care episode. Among children with less than 12 months of time spent in foster care, the majority remained in stable placements during that time (median = 85.6 percent in 2014).
- The proportions of children experiencing more than two placement settings increased with more time spent in foster care. The median percentage of children experiencing two or fewer placement settings across states was 66.1 percent for children who had been in foster care between 12 to 24 months, and 35.7 percent for children who had been in foster care for 24 months or longer.
- For children in care between 12 and 24 months, the percentage of children experiencing two or fewer placement settings (measure 6.1b) increased from 61.4 percent in 2010 to 66.0 percent in 2014 (a 7.5 percent increase). For this measure, 20 states improved in performance while only 4 declined.
- There was an even greater improvement in performance on measure 6.1c, the percentage of children in care for 24 months or longer who experienced two or fewer placement settings. For this measure, the median increased from 32.0 percent in 2010 to 35.3 percent in 2014, a 10.3 percent increase. Furthermore, 33 states demonstrated improvement on this measure, while only 4 declined in performance.

Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

- Of children entering foster care at under 12 years, 4.0 percent or less were placed in group homes or institutions in about half the states, in 2014 (measure 7.1). Data also indicate that there were only two states where the percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions was greater than 10 percent.¹⁴
- Previous reports have shown significant improvements over time on measure 7.1, and this trend continued between 2010 and 2014 when the median decreased from 4.5 to 3.9 percent, a 12.7 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is more desirable for this measure). During the 5-year span, 25 states showed improved performance on this measure, and 15 declined in performance.

¹⁴ The two states were Arkansas and South Carolina.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

In reviewing the key findings in all seven outcome areas, it is clear that there are both areas of strength and areas in need of improvement for children who come into contact with state child welfare systems. All of these areas deserve additional investigation to move the child welfare field forward. Some areas needing additional attention are listed below. Note that the AFCARS data are too limited to provide insight into many of these issues, but they are presented here for the purpose of encouraging the field to further review and address the issues. These areas include the following:

- States continue to experience challenges finding permanent homes for children with disabilities and for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12. Agencies should review their data and current practices to consider what additional barriers may be preventing these older youth and children with disabilities from being placed into permanent homes.
- Between 2010 and 2014, there was a decline in performance on the measure related to timeliness of reunification without increasing reentry. It is important to note that there may be a variety of factors that contribute to lower performance on this measure, and these factors may vary considerably between states. However, for those states that struggle in this area, a careful review of specific barriers would be beneficial.
- Overall, national performance on timeliness of adoptions has remained relatively stable since 2010, and it continues to be a challenge for most states. States should continue to monitor performance on measures related to the timeliness of adoption and work to improve upon their efforts to ensure that children are placed quickly in secure, caring, and safe environments.
- The percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions has continued to decline, but there are a few states that still struggle in this area. It would be useful to determine what specific strategies may have contributed to these improvements and share those practices with states looking for additional assistance.

Data and analysis presented throughout the full Child Welfare Outcomes Report offer additional details regarding overall national performance. New outcome-based visuals in the report display both single-year performance and performance over time from 2010 through 2014.

Table 1. Original Outcome Measures and Median State Performance, 2010–2014¹⁵

Outcome Measures ¹⁶	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period? (N=51 states)*	5.0%	5.2%	5.1%	5.4%	4.9%
Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member? (N=45 states)*	.32%	.28%	.27%	.34%	.25%
Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=45 states)	86.8%	87.3%	87.7%	89.6%	89.2%
Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=41 states)	76.1%	77.7%	78.7%	79.3%	78.9%
Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=45 states)	65.2%	65.5%	64.8%	66.8%	63.9%
Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care in the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care? (N=45 states)*	23.8%	25.1%	23.3%	21.3%	20.0%
Measure 4.1: Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care? (N=45 states)	68.3%	68.3%	65.5%	65.7%	66.1%
Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (N=45 states)	8.1%	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%	7.0%
Measure 5.1a: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage were discharged in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=45 states)	4.1%	3.7%	4.5%	3.9%	4.1%
Measure 5.1b: Percentage of children discharged to adoption at least 12 but less than 24 months from the date of entry into foster care (N=45 states)	28.2%	28.1%	29.2%	31.7%	30.2%
Measure 6.1a: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for less than 12 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=45 states)	85.3%	85.9%	85.2%	86.0%	85.4%
Measure 6.1b: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=45 states)	61.4%	62.9%	64.2%	64.8%	66.0%
Measure 6.1c: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=45 states)	32.0%	32.8%	35.2%	34.2%	35.3%
Measure 7.1: Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or institution? (N=45 states)*	4.5%	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	3.9%

* For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

¹⁵ The 2014 data included on this table may be different from the data included in the text of the chapter due to differences in the number of states included in the single year and multi-year analyses.

¹⁶ Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT DATA SITE

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report data site provides users with the ability to view and manipulate the state data in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports and allows for significantly faster release of these data than is possible via the publication of the full report. The site features Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data. The data were reviewed and approved by the states for inclusion in the report. Data updates to the site occur annually.

In 2016, the Child Welfare Outcomes Report data site underwent a series of updates to improve user experience on the site and ease of searching and displaying data.

Take advantage of the data site's increased capabilities

With the data site, users have the ability to:

- View one state's data or simultaneously compare data for multiple states, including by ACF region.
- Compare data for a single state across years or view data for one or multiple states from a single year.
- View state context, demographic, and outcome data in tables grouped by type of data.
- View additional context and demographic data for states not included in the report, including two distinct breakdowns of race and ethnicity data.
- View static state data pages, including state comments previously included in the full reports.

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report data site can be accessed at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Use the search to find data of interest

Users can dynamically search for data of interest by typing keywords into the search function to view the pages where the specific data are located.

Choose from a variety of data output formats for presenting your data

Users may view the selected data as a table or as a graph. Users can also export the data into a variety of formats, including copying or printing the data directly from the site, exporting it to Excel or PDF, or saving data as a CSV file.

For questions or more information about the Child Welfare Outcomes Report data site, please contact the Children's Bureau at CBDataTeam@acf.hhs.gov.

Introduction to the Child Welfare Outcomes, Data, and Analysis

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report is created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to meet requirements of Section 203(a) of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA).¹⁷ ASFA created Section 479A of the Social Security Act (the Act) to require HHS to issue an annual report that assesses state performance in operating child protection and child welfare programs under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.¹⁸ *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998* was the first report created in the Child Welfare Outcomes series of reports. The present report, *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014*, is the 15th report since the series' inception.

UPDATES TO THE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report is currently undergoing a series of transitions in order to meet the evolving reporting needs of HHS and other consumers of child welfare data. Updates to the report will impact both its content and format and are scheduled to be made over the course of the next several reports. The current report includes the following changes:

- This report takes a new approach to presenting state-level context and outcomes data. Past reports have provided state-level data in a series of tables embedded within individual state Data Pages. *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014* moves from this states-based visualization format to a measures-based one. State data for key measures will be presented together, with visuals displaying performance across all states in the most recent year of analysis, as well as changes in individual state performance over time. With these changes, readers will be able to view state trends and to see current state-by-state comparisons within each of the outcome measures.
- Recognizing the growing need for more dynamic uses of data and the increasing use of the Child Welfare Outcomes data site, some of the data points traditionally found within the state data pages have been removed from the printed report and made available only on the data site. This new data-visualization approach optimizes viewing of performance-based measures in the printed report and gives data site users flexibility in what data points they want to view and how that data can be displayed. For a full list of the data points now presented only on the data site, please see the final section of this chapter.

OUTCOME MEASURES

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report provides information on national performance as well as the performance of individual states in seven outcome categories.¹⁹ Prior to the first report, HHS identified these outcomes in close consultation with state and local child welfare agency administrators, child advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, state legislators, and other experts in the child welfare field. The outcomes reflect a consensus of these groups regarding important performance objectives for child welfare practice. The seven national outcomes established by HHS through this consultation process are:

- **Outcome 1:** Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect
- **Outcome 2:** Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- **Outcome 3:** Increase permanency for children in foster care
- **Outcome 4:** Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry
- **Outcome 5:** Reduce time in foster care to adoption
- **Outcome 6:** Increase placement stability
- **Outcome 7:** Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

Note that while the measures used in this report share some similarity with the data indicators used as part of HHS's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process, the measures are not the same. The CFSRs were authorized through the 1994 amendments to the Social Security Act (the Act) and require HHS to review state child and family service programs to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements in Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act. The reviews are also used to determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services and assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. The reviews focus on outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being, and one aspect of this review process uses a defined set of data indicators

¹⁷ See appendix A for the specifications of Section 479A of the Social Security Act, as created by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The Children's Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families, HHS, is responsible for this report.

¹⁸ The Title IV-E agency is the state agency authorized to use federal Title IV-E funds to support foster care, adoption assistance, and kinship guardianship assistance. Title IV-E has been amended on several occasions to provide federal funding for foster care, adoption, and the relative guardianship program. Title IV-B provides preventative and protective services for children. For a more detailed understanding of the history and changes over time, please see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/title-iv-e-legislation-policy>.

¹⁹ In this report, the designation of "state" includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on up to a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure.

to assess performance. While the specific data indicators used in the CFSRs have gone through revisions, their premise has remained consistent. Additional information about the CFSRs, including information on the data indicators used, may be found on the Children's Bureau website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews>. Readers should exercise caution when comparing performance on the Child Welfare Outcomes Report measures and CFSR performance because the measures differ in a number of respects, including data quality inclusion and exclusion criteria and differences in calculations.

CONTEXT DATA

This report presents data pertaining to state performance on the outcome measures as well as on certain child welfare-related contextual factors. These context data are relevant to understanding and interpreting performance on the outcome measures featured in these reports. The contextual factors include the following:

- Estimated child population statistics, including the total number of children under age 18 and child poverty data.²⁰
- Caseworker visits data for children in foster care, including the percentage of children in foster care visited monthly by their caseworker and the percentage of monthly visits occurring in the home of the child.²¹
- The number of children in foster care at the start of the federal fiscal year, children in care at the end of the federal fiscal year, and children who entered and exited foster care during the federal fiscal year.
- The number of children waiting for adoption at the end of the federal fiscal year.
- The number of children for whom an adoption was finalized during the federal fiscal year.

DATA SOURCES²²

Data for the original Child Welfare Outcomes measures and the majority of the context data in this report come from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). States are required by regulation to submit AFCARS data, while NCANDS data are submitted voluntarily by states. The specific NCANDS and AFCARS data elements used to calculate each outcome measure are outlined in appendix D.

Data for the caseworker visits requirements are reported in each state's Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). These data are not part of AFCARS or NCANDS, and some states elected to use a sampling procedure approved by HHS's Children's Bureau. As referenced in the previous section of this chapter, data on caseworker visits are required, under Section 479A of the Act, to be included in this report.

This report also uses child population data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau on an annual basis. Total child population estimates are derived by calculating expected population change from the most recent decennial census data. Child poverty data are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, an ongoing survey that annually samples a small percentage of the population in order to provide communities with information relevant to their service provision and investments.²³

The data used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report may vary slightly from other sources if a state resubmitted data after HHS prepared the data for this report.²⁴

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System

NCANDS is a federally sponsored effort that encourages states to collect and analyze data pertaining to children who come to the attention of public child protective services agencies as alleged victims of abuse or neglect. NCANDS was a result of a directive included in the 1988 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to establish a national data collection and analysis program on child abuse and neglect.²⁵ The data are submitted voluntarily by the states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. NCANDS data are published annually in the Child Maltreatment report series.²⁶ A summary of the most recent report, *Child Maltreatment 2014*, is presented in appendix E.

²⁰ These data come from the Census Bureau and reflect estimates rather than actual numbers. These data are based on the calendar year and not the fiscal year.

²¹ Section 479A(6) of the Social Security Act requires states to include data on caseworker visits in this annual report. Requirements for caseworker visits data were revised in Pub. L. 112-34 and are now defined under Section 424(f)(1) and (2) of the Act. In 2012, states began using the revised methodology for reporting caseworker visits data, which is detailed in Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pi1201.pdf>. For more information, see appendix C.

²² Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for federal fiscal year (FY) 2014 (October 1, 2013–September 30, 2014).

²³ Additional information on the methodology used to calculate child population estimates can be found on the Census Bureau's website at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/methodology.html>. Additional information on the methodology used to collect and calculate child poverty data can be found on the American Community Survey section of the Census Bureau's website at <http://www.census.gov/acs>.

²⁴ For this report, AFCARS data were prepared on April 16, 2015; NCANDS data were prepared on July 21, 2015; Census data were prepared on July 1, 2015; and caseworker visits data were prepared on March 27, 2015.

²⁵ More information about CAPTA can be found on the Children's Bureau website at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cwpm/programs/cb/laws_policies/laws/cwpm/policy.jsp?idFlag=2.

²⁶ Some results presented in this report may not be precisely the same as those presented in the Child Maltreatment reports due to differences in data inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The NCANDS Child File is a data file that states submit annually. In 2014, each of the 52 states submitted an NCANDS Child File. This file contains detailed case information about each child who is the subject of an investigation or assessment in response to a maltreatment allegation. Any child who is associated with a report that has received a disposition during the year is included in the Child File. Although a disposition usually refers to a finding regarding the allegation, it also can include those reports that were closed without a finding.

The Child File is the primary data source for the safety-related data included in this report. While alternate safety data sources sometimes are allowed for the purposes of the CFSRs, they are not used here.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

Most data included in this report come from AFCARS. Title IV-E agencies are required to submit case-level information to AFCARS twice a year on all children who are: under their care and responsibility for placement; covered by an interagency agreement with another public agency and receiving Title IV-E funds; or adopted with Title IV-E agency involvement. The requirements for AFCARS are codified in federal regulation at 45 CFR 1355.40.

DATA ANALYSES IN THE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT

Chapters II through V of this report present key findings of analyses conducted across states. These findings pertain to variations across states in performance on the outcome measures, changes in performance on the measures over time, and the relationships between contextual factors and state performance. In addition, there are occasional instances in which certain state data are excluded from cross-state analyses due to data quality problems. Therefore, the total number of states included may vary for each analysis.²⁷

Percent change calculations

Change in state performance over time is assessed by calculating a percent change in performance on the measures.²⁸ Consistent with HHS's historical approach to the analyses in these reports, a percent change of 5.0 or greater in either direction (i.e., positive or negative) is used as a general indicator that meaningful change in performance on the outcome measures occurred.

Therefore, for purposes of the analyses presented in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, if the percent change in performance from 2010 to 2014 was less than 5.0 in either direction, the determination is that there was "no change" in performance.

The concept of percent change over time is used in this report to highlight the fact that some changes may appear small in absolute terms but represent large proportional changes.

Correlations

Strength of relationships between measures and context variables is assessed using correlation coefficients, specifically Pearson's *r*. This coefficient can range from -1 to +1. In the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, these coefficients are interpreted in accordance with J. P. Guilford's suggested interpretations for correlation coefficient values.²⁹ These are as follows:

- A coefficient of 0.0 up to plus or minus .20 indicates a very low or negligible correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus .20–.40 indicates a low correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus .40–.70 indicates a moderate correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus .70–.90 indicates a high correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus .90–1.00 indicates a very high correlation.

THE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT DATA SITE

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report data site (<https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>) is a web-based tool that allows users to view Child Welfare Outcomes Report data and create customized outputs according to individual needs. Users can isolate and view the variables in which they are most interested, compare data across states, choose from a variety of different data-output displays, and export data reports into Excel and printer-friendly formats. The website also enables users to access data not currently available in the full report, including the following measures:

²⁷ In the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, two separate national medians are computed for each measure for 2014. In the 2014 Range of state Performance tables, national medians are calculated using data from all states that had adequate data available for 2014 only. However, when looking at performance over time, a separate national median is calculated for 2014 that includes only data from the states that had adequate data available for all the relevant fiscal years (2010 through 2014). This is done to provide a more accurate calculation of change over time. Therefore, the number of states (N) included in each of these calculations may vary, and these two medians may vary slightly.

²⁸ Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.0 percent in 2010 and 4.9 percent in 2014, so the formula is $[(4.9 - 5.0) / 5.0] \times 100 = -2.0$ percent decrease.

²⁹ Guilford, J. P. (1956). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Estimated general child population statistics with regard to the race/ethnicity of children
- Characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, and maltreatment type) of child maltreatment victims
- Mean and median response time
- Characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, median length of stay) of children in foster care at the start of the federal fiscal year, children in care at the end of the year, and children who entered and exited foster care
- Characteristics (age and race/ethnicity) of children waiting for adoption and of children with finalized adoptions
- Alternative categorical breakdowns for all race/ethnicity data

The website allows for the release of report data in a timelier manner than is possible through the full report publication process. Data updates to the site occur annually, after the data have been reviewed by the states and prior to the release of the full report. Site functionality also is updated on a regular basis in order to provide users with new and increased capabilities for data use and reporting.

I: Child Welfare Outcomes Demographic Data

In addition to reporting on specific child welfare outcome measures, the Child Welfare Outcomes Report also includes data and information on a range of child populations, including the overall national child population, state child populations, and subgroups within states.³⁰ This chapter provides an overview of state-by-state child populations under age 18, child populations living in poverty, children in foster care, children waiting for adoption, and adopted children in order to provide context for the child welfare outcomes information contained in subsequent chapters.

NATIONAL CHILD POPULATION

In 2014, the total population of children under the age of 18 was estimated to be 74,356,370. The three states with the largest populations under the age of 18 are California (9,153,152), Texas (7,115,614), and New York (4,228,906). These states also have the three largest populations of children in foster care. The three states with the smallest populations under the age of 18 are the District of Columbia (115,305), Vermont (121,586), and Wyoming (138,323). Similarly, Wyoming and Vermont are second and third in rank for the smallest foster care populations.

Nationally, 21.7 percent of children under the age of 18 were estimated to live in poverty in 2014. Poverty rates for children vary widely across states, ranging from 12.8 percent to 58.4 percent, and 22 states (42 percent) have poverty rates above the national average of 21.7 percent. Although there is evidence of a relationship between income and child maltreatment, there is no meaningful correlation between states' foster care entry rates and their estimated proportion of the child population living in poverty for 2014 (Pearson's $r=0.05$).³¹

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

On the last day of fiscal year (FY) 2014, approximately 415,000 children were in foster care nationwide. Previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports have noted a downward trend in the number of children in foster care. New foster care data suggest that the recent decline in the number of children in foster care has leveled off and the number of children in foster care is rising. Figure I-1 shows a dramatic decline in the number of children in foster care on the last day of the FY between 2005 and 2014. The number declined from 511,000 in 2005 to 415,000 in 2014, an 18.8 percent decrease.³² However, the number of children in foster care hovered around 400,000 from 2010 through 2013, but increased in 2014 to 415,000. Note that the data displayed in the table are from an HHS report, *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2005–FY 2014*, and are current as of July 2015.³³

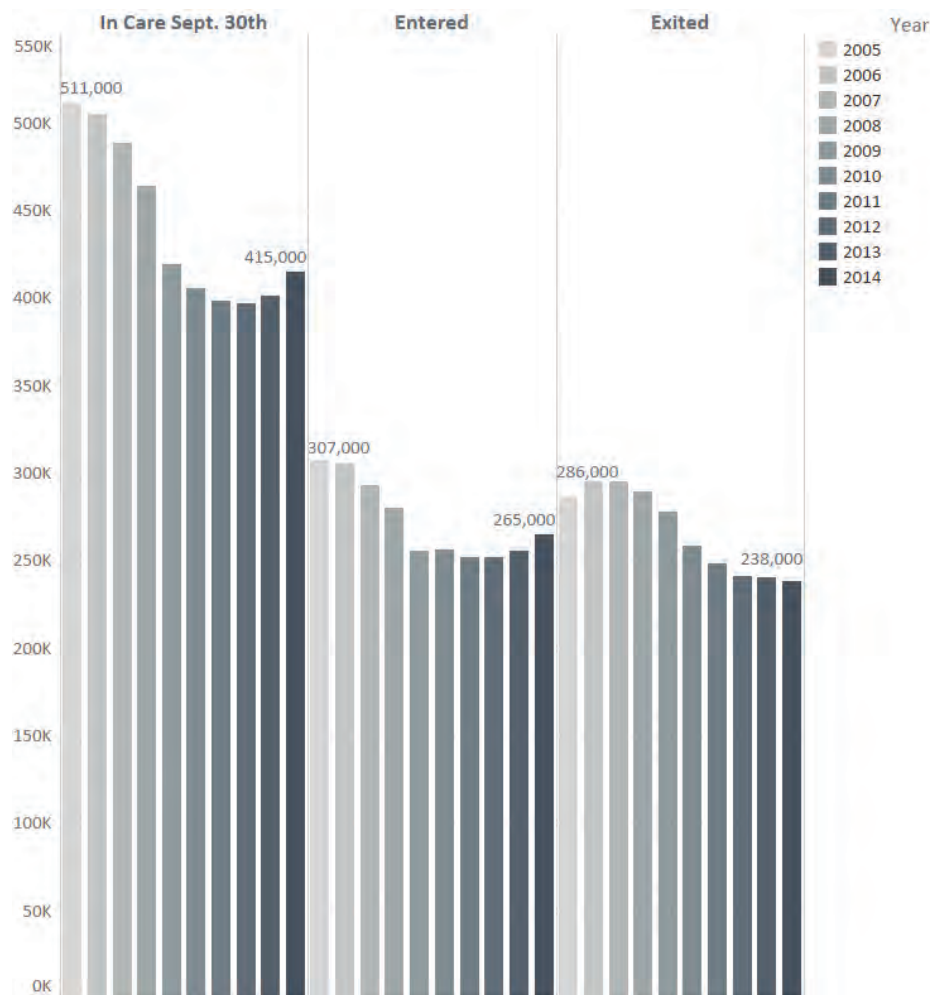
³⁰ In this report, the designation of "state" includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure.

³¹ For example, see Eckenrode J., Smith E. G., McCarthy M. E., & Dineen M. (2014). Income inequality and child maltreatment in the United States. *Pediatrics*, 133(3):454–461. doi:10.1542/peds.2013-1707

³² For more information, see *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2005–FY 2014* on the Children's Bureau website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>. The data used in *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2005–FY 2014* were updated as of July 2015.

³³ The *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2005–FY 2014* data were used for this section of the report because they are more recent and better demonstrate the significant fluctuations occurring in the foster care population over time. Due to differences in sources, these data may not be consistent with other data displayed throughout the report.

Figure I-1. Number of Children in Care, 2005–2014 (N=52 States)*



* All numbers presented in this table are rounded to the nearest thousand.

The AFCARS data do not provide enough information to identify possible factors associated with the decline in the number of children in foster care. However, a number of states have been making deliberate efforts to safely reduce the number of children in care through various programmatic and policy initiatives.³⁴ For example, some states have been providing more in-home services to families, increasing efforts to identify relative homes when out-of-home care is necessary, hiring more child protective services (CPS) staff, or implementing greater use of family group decision-making meetings.³⁵

Longer range AFCARS data show that, between FY 2005 and FY 2014, the number of children in care on the last day of the FY decreased by 18.8 percent, from 511,000 to 415,000.

Of the children and youth reported in foster care on the last day of FY 2014, nearly half (49.8 percent) were age seven or younger, and 16.5 percent were age 16 or older. The national median percentages of children in care on the last day of FY 2014 by race were 0.3 percent Alaskan Native/American Indian, 0.3 percent Asian, 17.3 percent Black, 0.0 percent Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 9.8 percent Hispanic (of any race), 46.9 percent White, and 5.6 percent two or more races. Additional data for the age and race of children in care are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. Additional information about longer-term demographic trends is available in the HHS report *Recent Demographic Trends in Foster Care*.³⁶

³⁴ See the following for examples: (1) Freundlich, M. (2010). *Legislative strategies to safely reduce the number of children in foster care*. National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/strategies_reducing_the_number_of_children_in_foster_care.pdf; and (2) National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. (2010). State efforts to safely reduce the number of children in foster care. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-ehsw-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/state-efforts-to-safely-reduce-t.html>

³⁵ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2011). *TANF and child welfare programs: Increased data sharing could improve access to benefits and services*. (GAO-12-2). Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-2>

³⁶ For more information, see *Recent Demographic Trends in Foster Care* on the Children's Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/data-brief-trends-in-foster-care-1>.

Foster Care Entry Rates

States differed considerably in 2014 with respect to both the number of children in foster care and the rate of foster care entry, defined as the number of children entering foster care per 1,000 children in the state population.³⁷ The foster care child entry rate ranged from 1.5 to 9.8 children per 1,000 children in the population, and the median across states was 3.5 children per 1,000 children in the population (N=52 states).³⁸

The reasons for variations in the rate of foster care entry are difficult to determine. The variation cannot be attributed to differences in the rate of child victims in a state because the correlation between foster care entry rates and child victim rates in 2014 was low (Pearson's $r=.16$). This observation also was made in prior Child Welfare Outcomes Reports. Variations in entry rates may be due to differences across states in policies regarding under what circumstances children are removed from the home and placed in foster care. The existence and availability of services designed to support families and enable children to remain in the home also may affect the number of children who enter foster care within a state.

CHILDREN WAITING FOR ADOPTION AND CHILDREN ADOPTED

In 2014, approximately 106,000 children were classified as waiting for adoption.³⁹ Of those children waiting for adoption, approximately 57 percent or 60,000 children had their parental rights terminated. In addition to children waiting for adoption, approximately 48,000 children were adopted in 2014. Although from 2010 to 2014, the number of children waiting for adoption almost consistently exceeded the number of children adopted in all states, 18 states were able to decrease the gap by five percent or more over the five-year period, as shown in table I-3.

SUMMARY

The child populations described in this chapter provide context for understanding and interpreting information on child welfare outcomes contained in subsequent chapters. Visualizations of the demographics described above are displayed at the end of this chapter. Additional demographic information on the child populations, including data on race, ethnicity, and age, and individual state data, including those states excluded from analyses and counts due to data quality problems, are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

³⁷ Rate of entry is calculated by dividing the total number of children entering foster care in a state by the total child population in that state and multiplying by 1,000 [(N entering FC/child population) x 1,000].

³⁸ As noted in footnote 20, some values in this report may differ from those displayed in the policy chapter. This is due to the inclusion of the most currently available data in the policy chapter, which may include data resubmissions from states that were received after the preparation date for the remainder of the report or revised population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

³⁹ There is no federal definition for a child "waiting for adoption." The definition used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report includes children and youth through age 17 who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A state's own definition may differ from that used here. Note that these adoption numbers are frequently updated. Please see the Children's Bureau website for the most updated data: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research>.

Figure I-2. Estimated Child Population Under Age 18, 2014 (N=52 States)

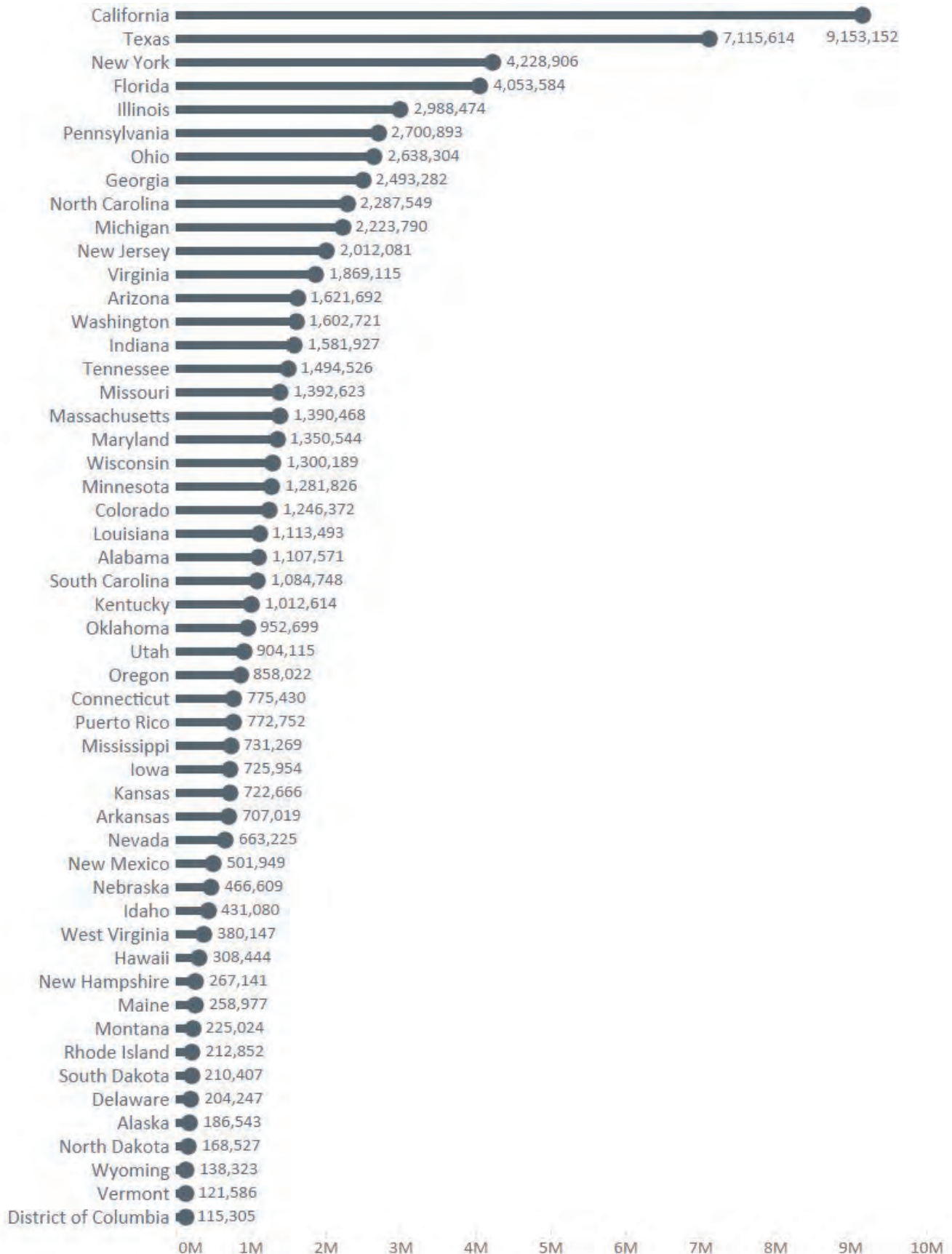


Figure I-3. Estimated Proportion of Child Population Living in Poverty, 2014 (N=52 States)

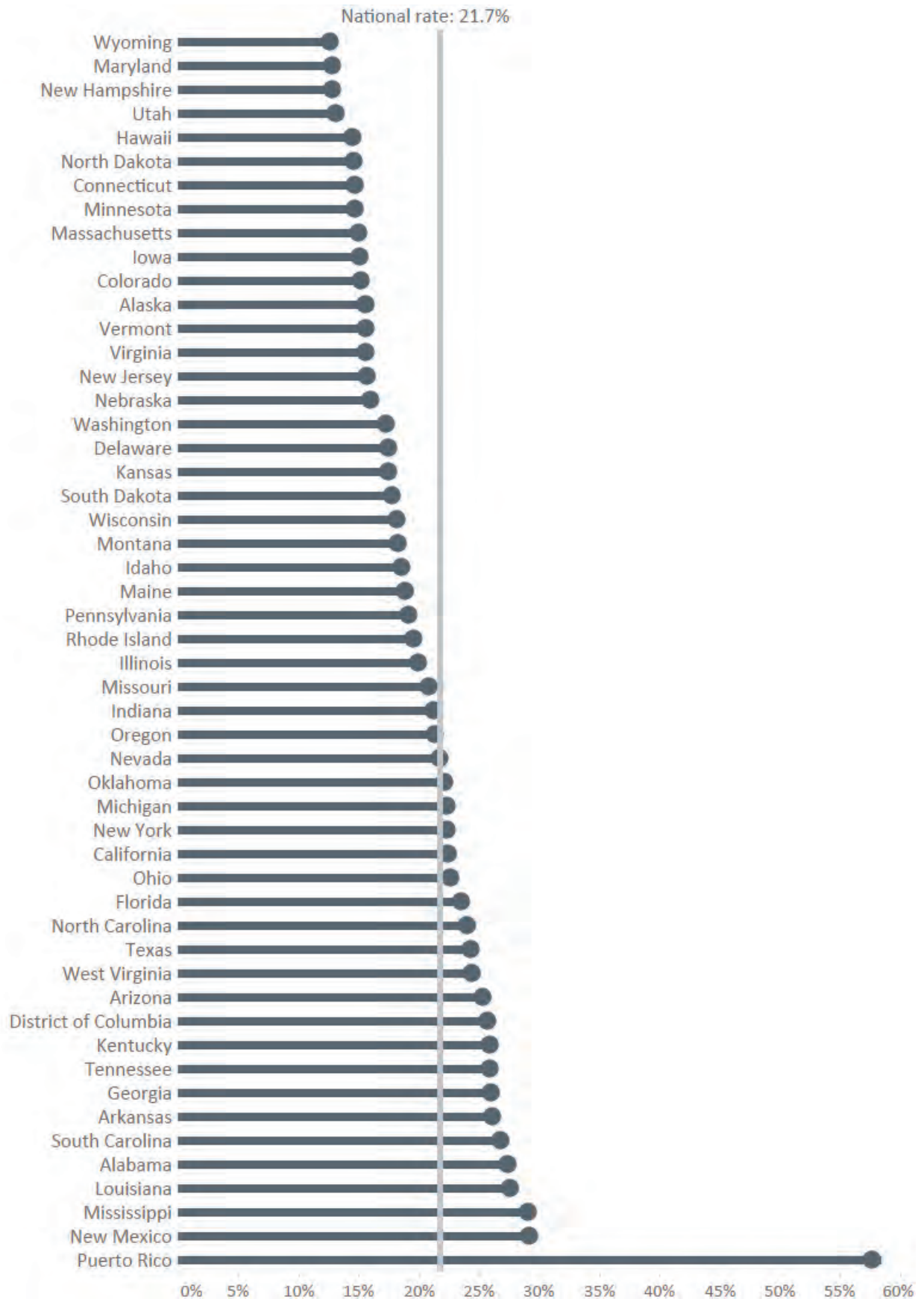
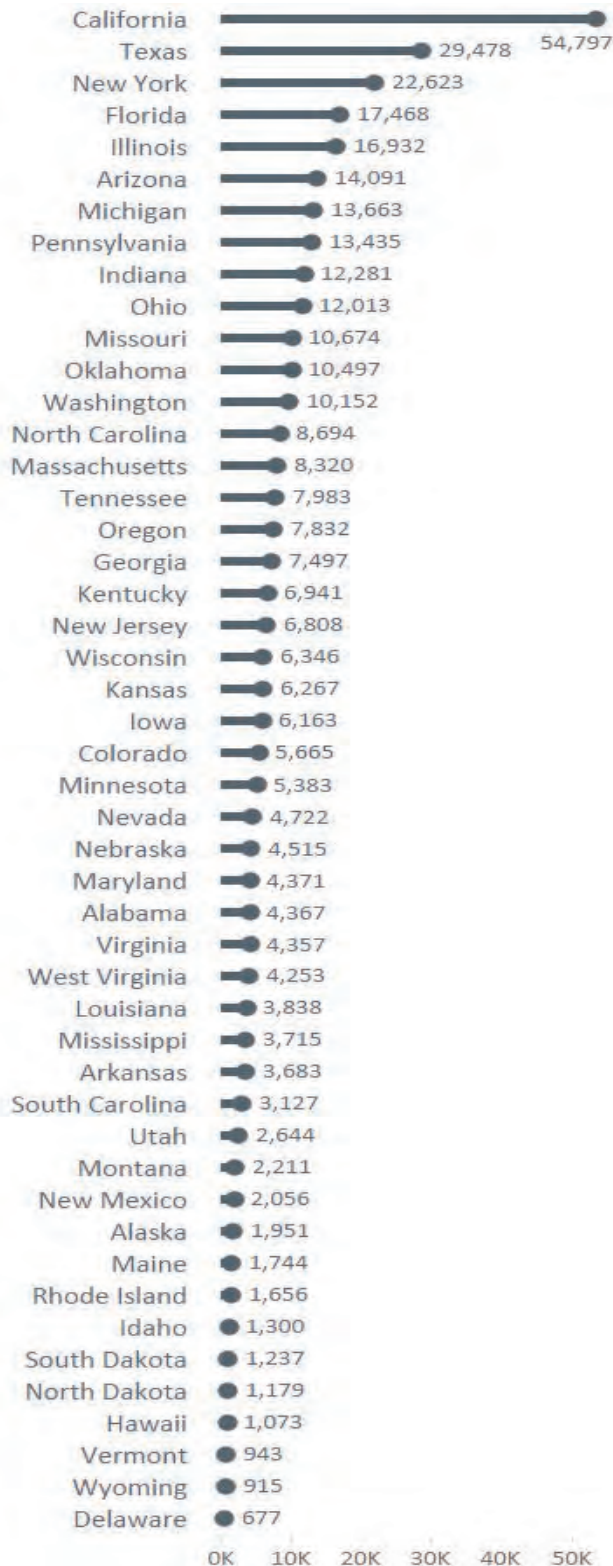
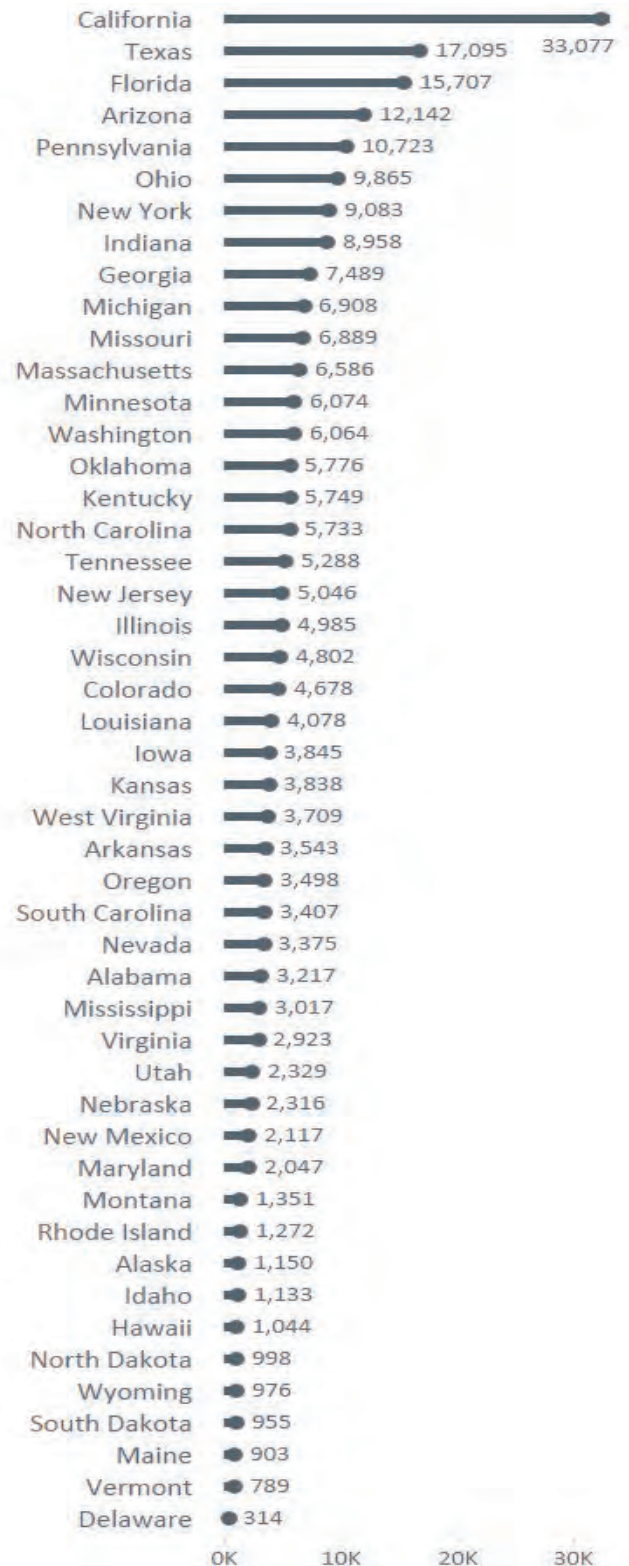


Figure I-4. Number of Children in Care on the First Day of the Fiscal Year (10/1), 2014 (N=48 States)*



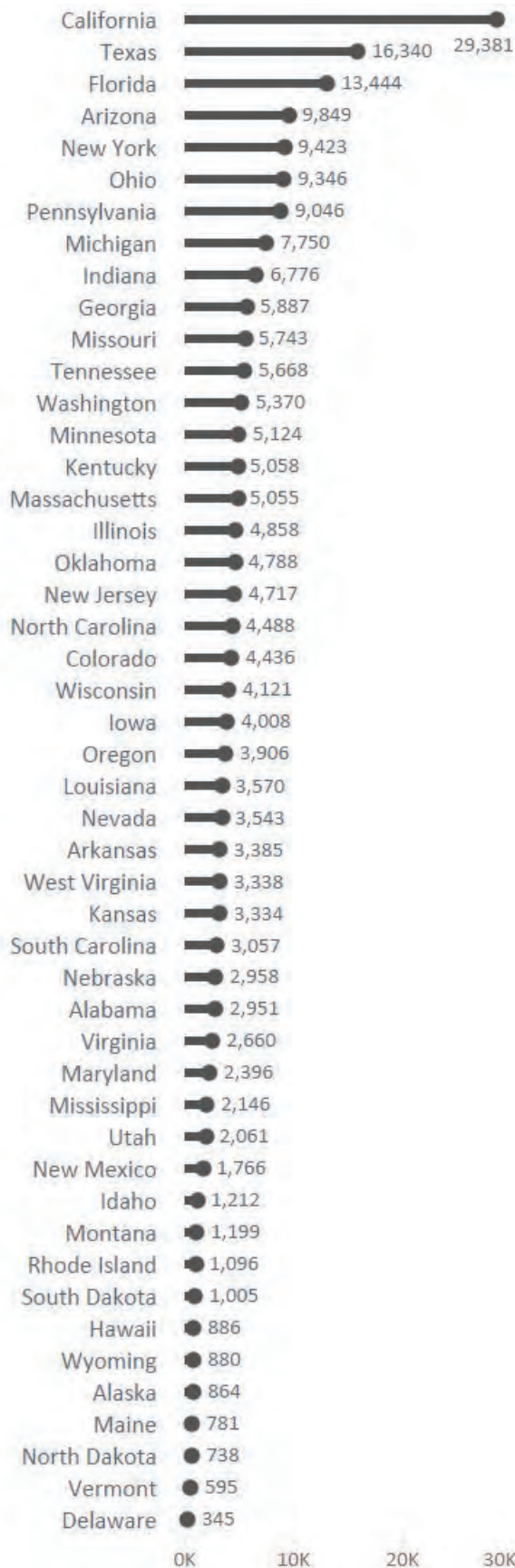
*Data in this chart includes all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure I-5. Number of Children Entering Care, 2014 (N=48 States)*



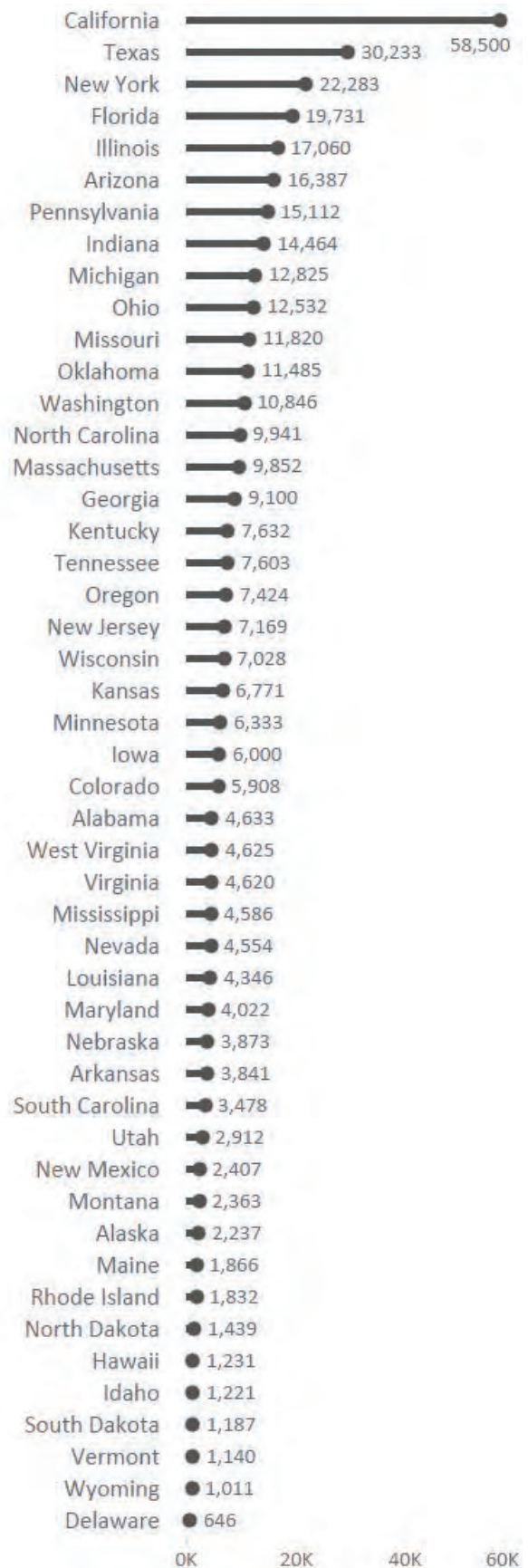
*Data in this chart includes all states for which adequate data are available.

**Figure I-6. Number of Children Exiting Care, 2014
(N=48 States)***



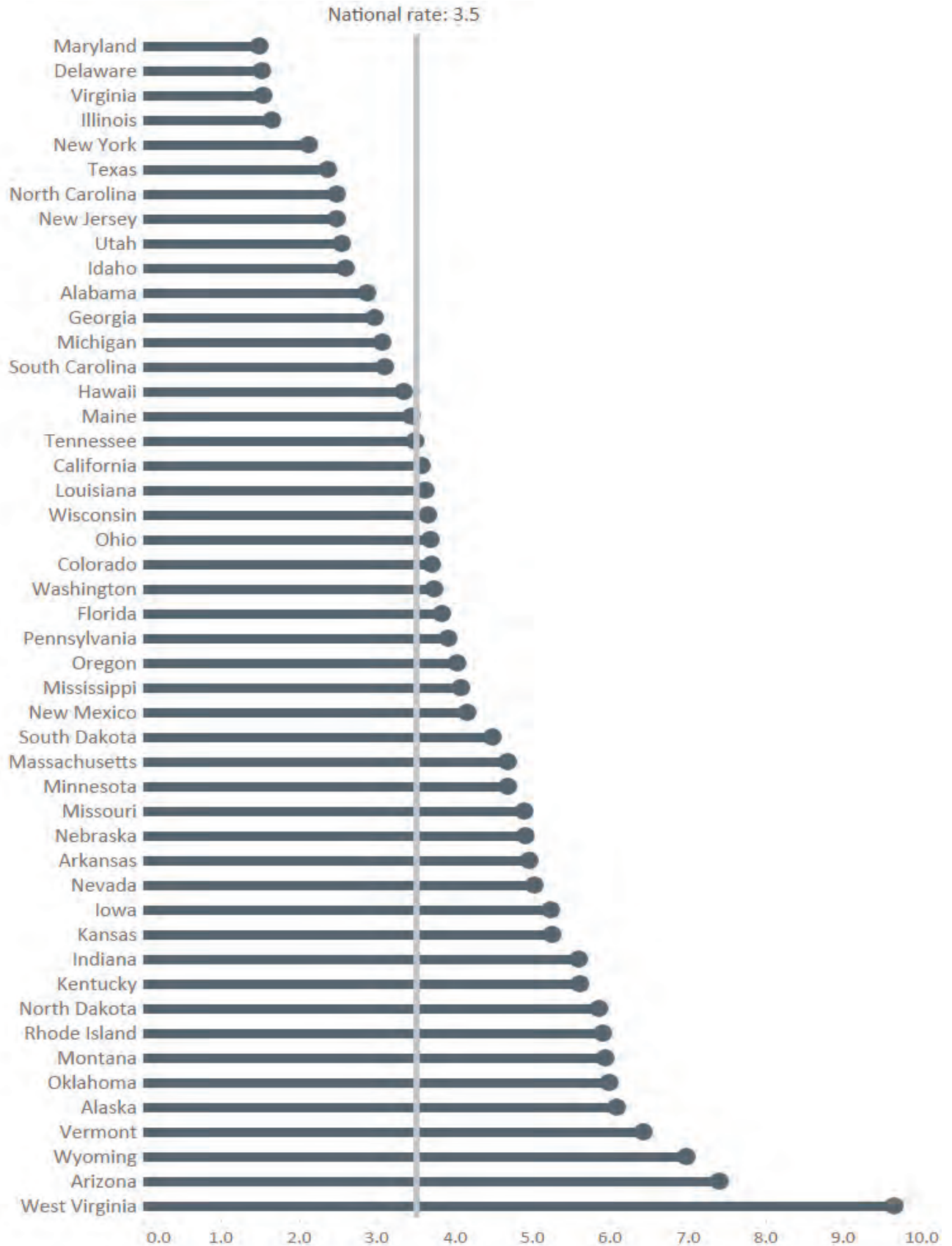
*Data in this chart includes all states for which adequate data are available.

**Figure I-7. Number of Children in Care on the Last Day of
the Fiscal Year (9/30), 2014 (N=48 States)***



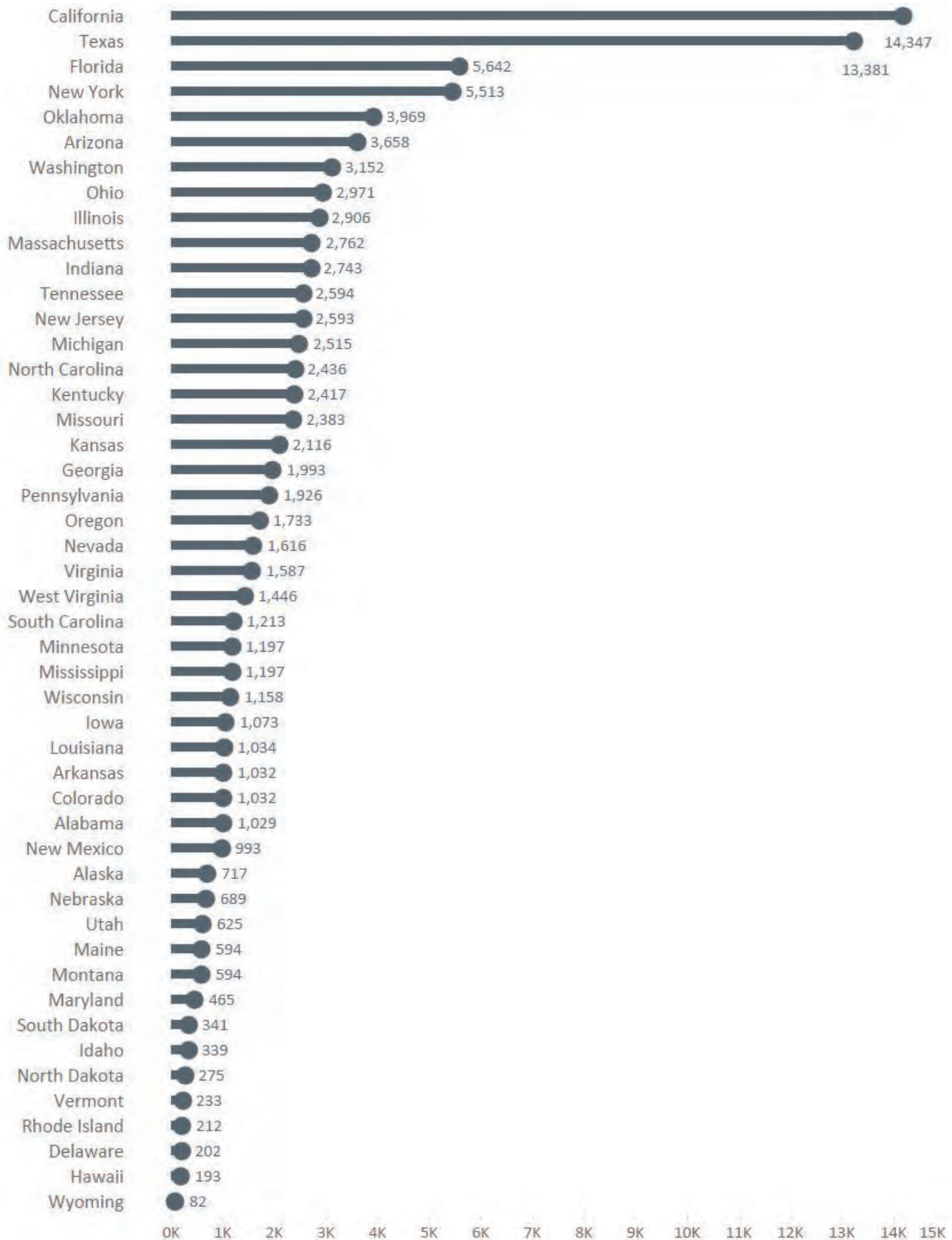
*Data in this chart includes all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure I-8. Foster Care Entry Rate per 1,000 Children, 2014 (N=48 States)*



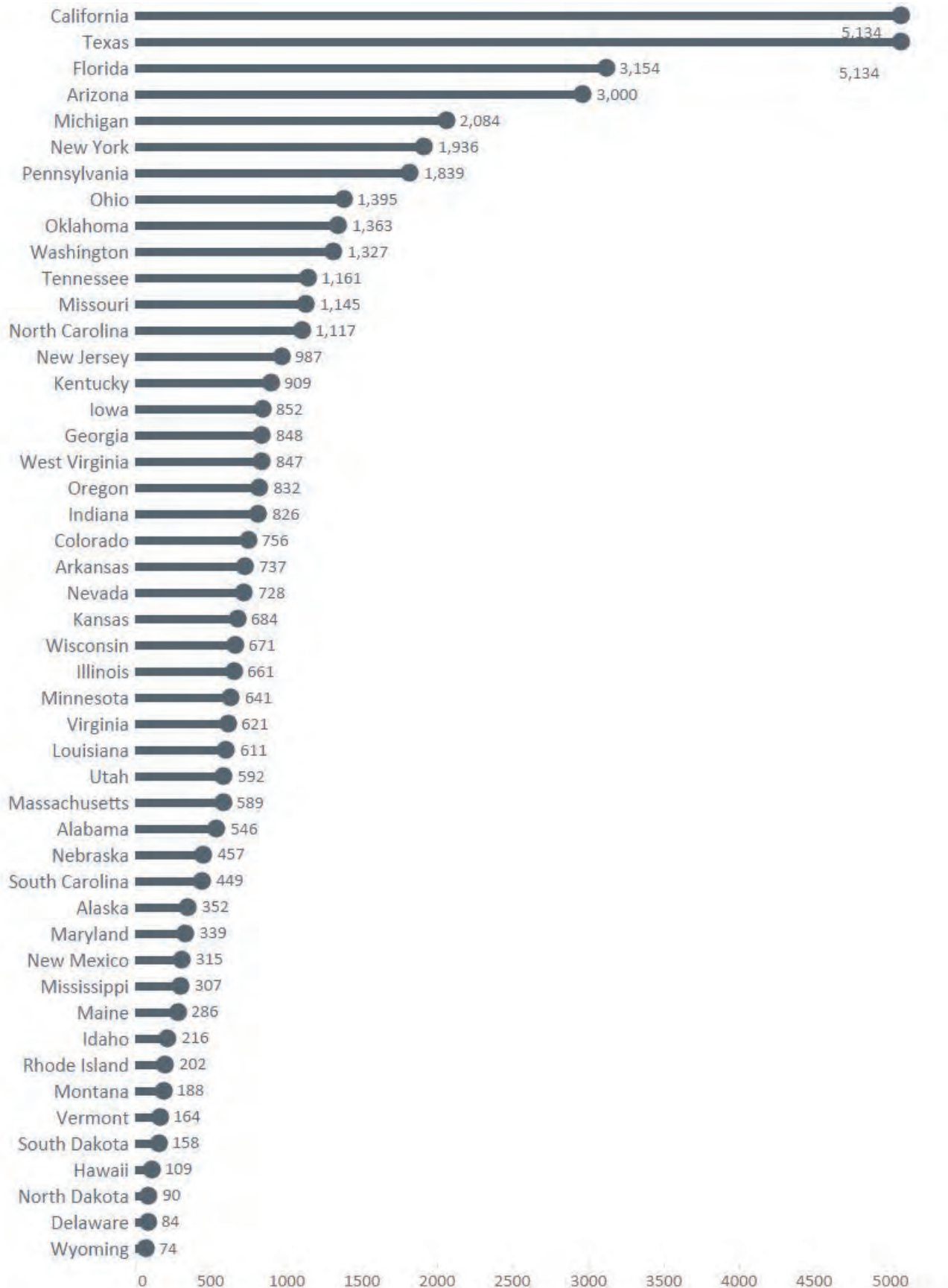
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure I-9. Number of Children Waiting for Adoption, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available. Note: There is no federal definition of waiting for adoption. The definition used includes children and youth through age 17 who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A state's own definition may differ from that used here.

Figure I-10. Number of Children Adopted, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Table I-1. Number of Children Waiting for Adoption, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Alaska	722	738	818	883	717
Arizona	2,670	2,833	2,953	3,611	3,658
Arkansas	1,614	1,414	1,019	997	1,032
California	16,217	14,591	13,070	15,643	14,347
Colorado	1,247	1,131	953	918	1,032
Delaware	253	244	244	218	202
Florida	5,037	4,994	5,182	3,667	5,642
Georgia	1,724	1,585	1,661	1,797	1,993
Hawaii	350	298	232	161	193
Idaho	394	341	280	334	339
Illinois	3,015	3,330	2,983	3,154	2,906
Indiana	3,202	2,917	3,125	2,604	2,743
Iowa	1,088	1,104	971	982	1,073
Kansas	1,829	1,820	1,855	1,843	2,116
Kentucky	1,952	1,920	2,112	2,229	2,417
Louisiana	1,101	1,159	1,090	954	1,034
Maine	581	514	492	577	594
Maryland	911	904	559	501	465
Massachusetts	2,757	2,665	2,467	2,483	2,762
Michigan	5,283	4,297	3,605	3,334	2,515
Minnesota	1,083	1,144	1,191	1,220	1,197
Mississippi	861	905	981	1,027	1,197
Missouri	2,004	2,079	2,084	2,154	2,383
Montana	495	461	404	499	594
Nebraska	773	833	907	704	689
Nevada	2,100	1,978	1,899	1,966	1,616
New Jersey	2,630	2,308	2,232	2,453	2,593
New Mexico	780	787	841	881	993
New York	6,669	6,499	6,258	5,878	5,513
North Carolina	2,473	2,266	2,087	2,191	2,436
North Dakota	235	245	220	247	275
Ohio	3,014	3,460	2,704	2,999	2,971
Oklahoma	2,869	2,953	2,830	3,236	3,969
Oregon	1,831	1,881	1,876	1,868	1,733
Rhode Island	317	270	226	248	212
South Carolina	1,699	1,413	1,330	1,227	1,213
South Dakota	436	388	407	361	341
Tennessee	1,692	2,014	2,524	2,665	2,594
Texas	13,178	14,919	13,267	13,123	13,381
Utah	555	566	567	612	625
Vermont	179	196	231	221	233
Virginia	1,623	1,413	1,553	1,526	1,587
Washington	3,149	2,813	2884	3114	3152
Wisconsin	1167	1179	1,151	1,183	1,158
Wyoming	225	208	163	88	82

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

Note: There is no federal definition for a child waiting to be adopted. The definition used in this table includes children and youth through age 17 who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A state's own definition may differ from that used here.

Table I-2. Number of Children Adopted, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Alaska	336	293	309	328	352
Arizona	2,045	2,275	2,275	2,522	3,000
Arkansas	597	591	703	691	737
California	6,459	5,710	5,938	5,322	5,134
Colorado	983	934	905	782	756
Delaware	67	95	91	112	84
Florida	3,391	2,945	3,294	3,415	3,154
Georgia	1,196	1,071	915	1,031	848
Hawaii	216	198	187	160	109
Idaho	313	259	273	206	216
Illinois	1,214	1,217	1,845	1,395	661
Indiana	1,458	1,556	1,713	961	826
Iowa	801	864	1,032	917	852
Kansas	694	781	764	674	684
Kentucky	754	824	784	797	909
Louisiana	641	641	655	731	611
Maine	276	296	291	214	286
Maryland	644	539	455	355	339
Massachusetts	725	724	754	799	589
Michigan	2,597	2,506	2,559	2,374	2,084
Minnesota	627	572	520	583	641
Mississippi	355	358	425	354	307
Missouri	1,170	1,212	1,228	1,231	1,145
Montana	191	238	225	165	188
Nebraska	437	413	417	586	457
Nevada	644	821	766	721	728
New Jersey	1,275	1,089	1,023	927	987
New Mexico	420	351	345	310	315
New York	2,205	2,214	2,182	2,184	1,936
North Carolina	1,615	1,463	1,329	1,222	1,117
North Dakota	145	119	155	104	90
Ohio	1,438	1,420	1,250	1,244	1,395
Oklahoma	1,628	1,294	1,533	1,286	1,363
Oregon	780	657	683	768	832
Rhode Island	184	201	191	162	292
South Carolina	529	588	776	506	449
South Dakota	133	168	126	177	158
Tennessee	972	772	813	1,159	1,161
Texas	4,709	4,718	5,039	5,443	5,134
Utah	574	577	562	586	592
Vermont	161	134	172	179	164
Virginia	747	755	639	709	621
Washington	1,633	1,583	1,227	1,328	1,327
Wisconsin	755	717	761	800	671
Wyoming	75	73	81	86	74

* Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

Table I-3. Percent Change in the Difference Between the Numbers of Children Waiting for Adoption and Children Adopted, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	Percent Change in the Difference Between the Numbers of Children Waiting for Adoption and Children Adopted, 2010–2014
Alaska	9%
Arizona	-68%
Arkansas	-51%
California	43%
Colorado	-72%
Delaware	76%
Florida	-27%
Georgia	-4%
Hawaii	-61%
Idaho	-61%
Illinois	85%
Indiana	31%
Iowa	-72%
Kansas	106%
Kentucky	100%
Louisiana	-34%
Maine	12%
Maryland	-80%
Massachusetts	200%
Michigan	-83%
Minnesota	-11%
Mississippi	151%
Missouri	6%
Montana	113%
Nebraska	-47%
Nevada	38%
New Jersey	26%
New Mexico	61%
New York	62%
North Carolina	-18%
North Dakota	28%
Ohio	10%
Oklahoma	60%
Oregon	16%
Rhode Island	-95%
South Carolina	44%
South Dakota	38%
Tennessee	47%
Texas	75%
Utah	-94%
Vermont	-57%
Virginia	29%
Washington	12%
Wisconsin	-35%
Wyoming	-89%

* Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

II: Keeping Children Safe

Public child welfare agencies are responsible for ensuring that children who have been found to be victims of abuse or neglect are protected from further harm. Whether the child is placed in out-of-home care or maintained in the home, the child welfare agency's first concern must be to ensure the safety of the child.

This chapter provides information on some contextual factors related to child safety as well as on the following two safety measures:

Measure 1.1: The percentage of child victims who experience a recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period

Measure 2.1: The percentage of all children in foster care who were maltreated by a foster parent or facility staff member

Unless otherwise noted, data reported in this chapter come from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and are for federal fiscal year (FY) 2010 through FY 2014. Through NCANDS, HHS collects and analyzes data on children who come into contact with public child protective services (CPS) agencies as alleged victims of abuse or neglect. Although submission of data to NCANDS is voluntary for states, HHS strongly encourages participation and provides technical assistance to help with data collection and reporting. Participation has increased over the past several years. At the time this report was prepared, all 52 states had submitted NCANDS data for 2014.

The Children's Bureau develops the annual *Child Maltreatment* reports, which include additional data providing by the states to NCANDS. Additional information on Child Maltreatment may be found on the Children's Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

CHILD VICTIMS AND CHILD FATALITIES⁴⁰

Child Victims

During 2014, approximately 702,000 children were confirmed to be victims of maltreatment.⁴¹ The overall national child victim rate was 9.4 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.⁴²

Additional data about child victims including age, race, and ethnicity are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Table II-1 shows the total number of child victims and the national child victim rate for 2010 through 2014.

Table II-1. Child Victims, 2010–2014*

Indicator	2010 (N=51 States)	2011 (N=51 States)	2012 (N=52 States)	2013 (N=52 States)	2014 (N=52 States)
Total Child Victims**	688,000	677,000	680,000	682,000	702,000
National Child Victim Rate	9.3	9.2	9.1	9.2	9.4

* The data in this table represent unique counts of child victims (a child only may be reported as a victim once).

** The total number of child victims is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

As indicated in table II-1, after an overall decline in the national victim rate between 2010 and 2012, the child victimization rate began to increase in 2013 and in 2014 reached the highest rate in the 5-year time period. It will require future years' data in order to determine whether this increase in the child victimization rate is a trend.

As was discussed in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, child victim rates varied dramatically across states. In 2014, they ranged from 1.2 child victims per 1,000 children to 22.9 child victims per 1,000 children.⁴³ There are a number of possible explanations for this variation. One explanation is that states vary in their definitions of "child maltreatment."⁴⁴ States with broader definitions of what constitutes child maltreatment may have higher victim rates than states with narrower definitions. Variations in the level of evidence required for substantiation also may contribute to different child victim rates among states.

⁴⁰ This report uses a unique count for child victims, which tallies a child only once regardless of the number of times he or she was found to be a victim during the reporting year.

⁴¹ For the purposes of this report, a victim of child maltreatment is defined as a child for whom an incident of abuse or neglect has been substantiated or indicated by an investigation or assessment. A state may include some children with alternative dispositions as victims (see *Child Maltreatment 2014*). It is important to note that the Child Welfare Outcomes Report uses the total reported number of child victims as opposed to a national estimate of child victims, which often is reported in Child Maltreatment. The total number of victims reported in this report is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

⁴² The national child victim rate is calculated by dividing the total number of child victims (702,000) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS data (74,356,370) and multiplying by 1,000.

⁴³ A state's rate of child victims is defined as the number of child victims reported to NCANDS per 1,000 children in the state's population.

⁴⁴ More information about variations in state definitions of child abuse and neglect can be found on Child Welfare Information Gateway: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/define/>.

Some additional factors limit the comparability of child victim rates across states. One such factor is the use of alternative response approaches.⁴⁵ In alternative response approaches, child welfare agencies respond with a referral for a family assessment rather than with a formal investigation when a decision is made that there are no immediate safety concerns for the child and the maltreatment allegation involves low or moderate risk. When a referral is made for a family assessment instead of an investigation, it is often the case that no determination is made as to the allegations of maltreatment, and therefore the child is not classified as a victim.⁴⁶ Even within states that have implemented alternative response systems, comparing outcomes for children across local jurisdictions is challenging due to varying degrees of implementation across the state. Although some states are implementing their systems statewide, others are gradually adding alternative response approaches to select jurisdictions.⁴⁷ These methodological challenges mean that caution is warranted in comparing states that are using alternative response approaches to those that are not. Similarly, when a state begins using this type of approach, examining change in performance over time within the state may prove difficult due to the shifting responses to allegations of maltreatment.

Child Fatalities

During 2014, there were approximately 1,500 child fatalities reported. The overall child fatality rate was 2.13 per 100,000 children in the population.⁴⁸ Like child victim rates, child fatality rates vary widely by state. In 2014, child fatality rates varied between 0.37 child fatalities per 100,000 children and 5.00 child fatalities per 100,000 children. Table II-2 shows the total number of child fatalities and the national child fatality rate for 2010 through 2014.

Table II-2. Child Fatalities, 2010–2014

Indicator	2010 (N=52 States)	2011 (N=52 States)	2012 (N=51 States)	2013 (N=50 States)	2014 (N=50 States)
Total Child Victims*	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,500	1,500
National Child Victim Rate	2.08	2.10	2.18	2.06	2.13

* The total number of child victims is rounded to the nearest 100.

As indicated in table II-2, the child fatality rate fluctuated between 2010 and 2014. There may be a number of reasons for the variation and lack of clear directional trend. Given the relatively low frequency of child fatalities, the national rate is sensitive to which states report data and to changes in the national population estimates produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. Additionally, changes in policy such as the passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Pub. L. 112–34) in 2010 could lead to better reporting and account for possible increases in child fatality rates.⁴⁹

RANGE OF STATE PERFORMANCE IN 2014 ON SAFETY-RELATED OUTCOME MEASURES

State performance with regard to children’s safety is addressed through Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect, and Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care. Table II-3 summarizes state performance in 2014 on the measures pertaining to these outcomes. Note that cases identified as “alternative response victim” are not included in the calculation of these two safety outcome measures; only substantiated and indicated cases are included.

⁴⁵ The term “alternative response” is sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as “differential response,” “dual track response,” and “multitrack response.” These terms tend to refer to the provision of a response other than an investigation in regard to an allegation of maltreatment. Throughout this report, the term “alternative response” is used. For more information on alternative response, see the following: National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services. (2011). *Differential response in child protective services: A literature review*. Retrieved from http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschooll/departments/pediatrics/subs/can/DR/qicdr/General%20Resources/QIC-DR_Lit_Review%20version%20%202.pdf

⁴⁶ Some states make a distinction between those referrals for which services were required or even mandated and those referrals for which services were not needed or were voluntary. In these cases, some states have chosen to report the referrals to NCANDS as either “alternative response victim” for those in which services were mandated or “alternative response nonvictim” for those in which services were voluntary or not needed.

⁴⁷ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2008). *Differential response to reports of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/differential_response/differential_response.pdf

⁴⁸ The national child fatality rate is calculated by dividing the number of child fatalities reported by states (1,546) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS child fatality data (72,706,925) and multiplying by 100,000.

⁴⁹ For additional information, please refer to *Child Maltreatment 2014*, available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014>.

**Table II-3. Range of State Performance, 2014
Outcomes 1 and 2: Keeping Children Safe**

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range (Percent)
Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period? (N=52 states)**	2.9%	4.9%	6.6%	0.7–13.9%
Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member? (N=47 states)**	0.12%	0.27%	0.57%	0.00–1.42%

* Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

** For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

Recurrence of maltreatment

A number of variables impact the range in performance across states (range = 0.7 to 13.9 percent) with respect to maltreatment recurrence (measure 1.1), including variations in child victim rates across states. In general, states with higher child victim rates also tend to have higher rates of recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's $r=.66$ in 2014). A similar finding has been reported in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports.

States with higher child victim rates also tend to have higher recurrence rates.

The range in performance with regard to maltreatment recurrence in 2014 also appears to be related to differences across states with regard to the types of child maltreatment reported. Most notably, states with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect also tended to have a relatively high percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's $r=.45$). A related finding in research indicates that child maltreatment recurrence is more likely to involve neglect than either physical or sexual abuse.⁵⁰ The relationships between recurrence and types of maltreatment may be due to the fact that substantiated allegations of sexual or physical abuse are more likely to be followed by legal actions against the perpetrators as well as actions designed to ensure that the perpetrator is prevented from further unsupervised contact with the victim until identified problems have been resolved. In contrast, substantiated allegations of neglect often are not followed by these actions unless the neglect is considered extremely severe.

Maltreatment of children in foster care

Table II-3 (above) shows the range in state performance regarding the maltreatment of children while in foster care (measure 2.1, range = 0.00 percent to 1.42 percent). This variation among states may be influenced by a number of factors, such as: the extent to which training and services are offered to support foster families and facility staff members; variations in casework practices and the level of interaction the caseworker has with the family; and differences among states in background check requirements for those who care for children in foster care.⁵¹

CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF MALTREATMENT RECURRENCE AND MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

The median performance across states for the years 2010 to 2014 on measures of maltreatment recurrence (measure 1.1) and maltreatment in foster care (measure 2.1) are presented in table II-6. Table II-6 also presents findings regarding the change in state performance on these measures. To determine the change in state performance for measures 1.1 and 2.1, performance in 2014 was compared to performance in 2010. Change in performance was computed by using a percent change calculation.⁵²

⁵⁰ See the following examples: (1) Drake, B., Jonson-Reid, M., Way, I., & Chung, S. (2003). Substantiation and recidivism. *Child Maltreatment*, 8(4), 248–260; (2) Lipien, L., & Forthofer, M. S. (2004). An event history analysis of recurrent child maltreatment reports in Florida. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28(9), 947–966; and (3) Fluke, J. D., Shusterman, G. R., Hollinshead, D., & Yuan, Y.-Y. T. (2005). *Rereporting and recurrence of child maltreatment: Findings from NCANDS*. Retrieved from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/05/child-maltreat-rereporting/index.htm>

⁵¹ See the following examples: (1) National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. (2007). *Foster parent in-service training*. Retrieved from <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/policy-issues/Foster-Parent-In-Service-Training.pdf>; (2) Ryan, P., & Cole, K. (1993). *Maltreatment in family foster care: A survey of the states*. East Lansing, MI: National Foster Care Resource Center; and (3) Child Welfare Information Gateway State Statutes: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

⁵² Percent change is calculated by subtracting “old” data from “new” data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.0 percent in 2010 and 4.9 percent in 2014, so the formula is $[(4.9-5.0)/5.0] \times 100 = 2.0$ percent decrease.

**Table II-4. Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time 2010–2014
Outcomes 1 and 2: Keeping Children Safe***

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year (Percent)***					States That Improved in Performance 2010–2014	States That Declined in Performance 2010–2014
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		
Measure 1.1: Percentage of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a six-month period (N=51 states)****	5.0%	5.2%	5.1%	5.4%	4.9%	22 states (43%)	21 states (41%)
Measure 2.1: Percentage of children in foster care who were victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member (N=45 states)****	.32%	.28%	.27%	.34%	.25%	22 states (46%)	16 states (33%)

* In accordance with standard procedure in this report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

** Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table II-3 or appendix B. Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

*** The 2014 data included on this table may be different from the data included in table II-3 due to differences in the number of states included for each analysis.

**** For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

As shown in table II-4, performance with regard to recurrence of child maltreatment (measure 1.1) slightly improved between 2010 and 2014. The median went from 5.0 percent in 2010 to 4.9 percent in 2014, a 2.7 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure). Furthermore, a slightly higher percentage of states demonstrated an improvement in performance on this measure (43 percent) than showed a decline in performance (41 percent).

Over the time period examined for this report, national performance also improved with regard to the maltreatment of children in foster care (measure 2.1). Forty-six percent of states improved in performance between 2010 and 2014, compared to the 33 percent that declined in performance, with 15 percent showing no meaningful change. The national median decreased from .32 in 2010 to .25 in 2014, a 21.4 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure).

State performance on both of the safety-related outcome measures improved from 2010 to 2014.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

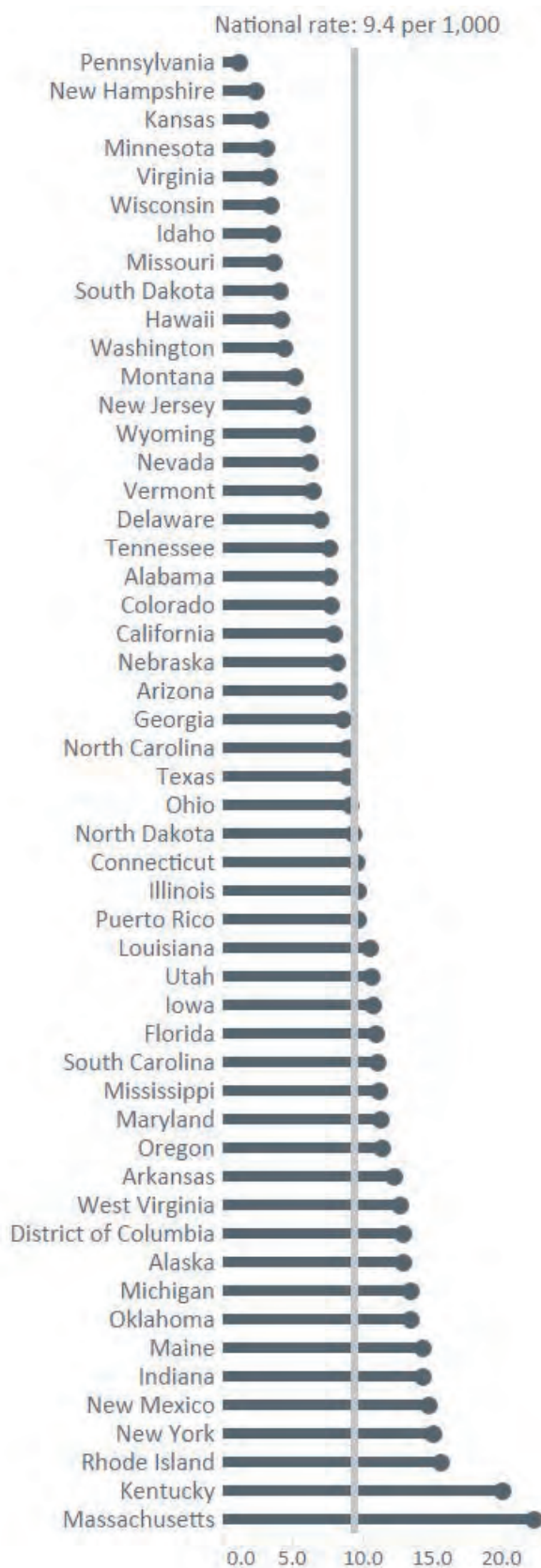
National performance for the two safety-related outcome measures, recurrence of maltreatment and maltreatment of children in foster care, improved between 2010 and 2014. For both of these safety measures, it is important to keep in mind that, while the percentages of maltreatment may be numerically small, these events have serious implications for the safety and well-being of children. Children who experience maltreatment, either at home or in care, can experience a wide variety of consequences ranging from physical and mental health problems to issues with cognitive development and academic achievement.⁵³ Furthermore, maltreatment recurrence is associated with an increase in trauma symptoms in children.⁵⁴

The end of this chapter displays outcome-based visuals related to keeping children safe, including child victim and fatality rates and state performance on measures 1.1 and 2.1. Additional context data related to child maltreatment and child safety, including age of child victims, race and ethnicity of child victims, maltreatment types for child victims, CPS responses and CPS response time, and individual state data including those states excluded from analyses and counts due to incomplete or inadequate data, are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

⁵³ Goldman, J., Salus, M. K., Wolcott, D., & Kennedy, K. Y. (2003). What are the consequences of child abuse and neglect? In *A coordinated response to child abuse and neglect: The foundation for practice* (pp. 35–38). Washington DC: Department of Health and Human Services.

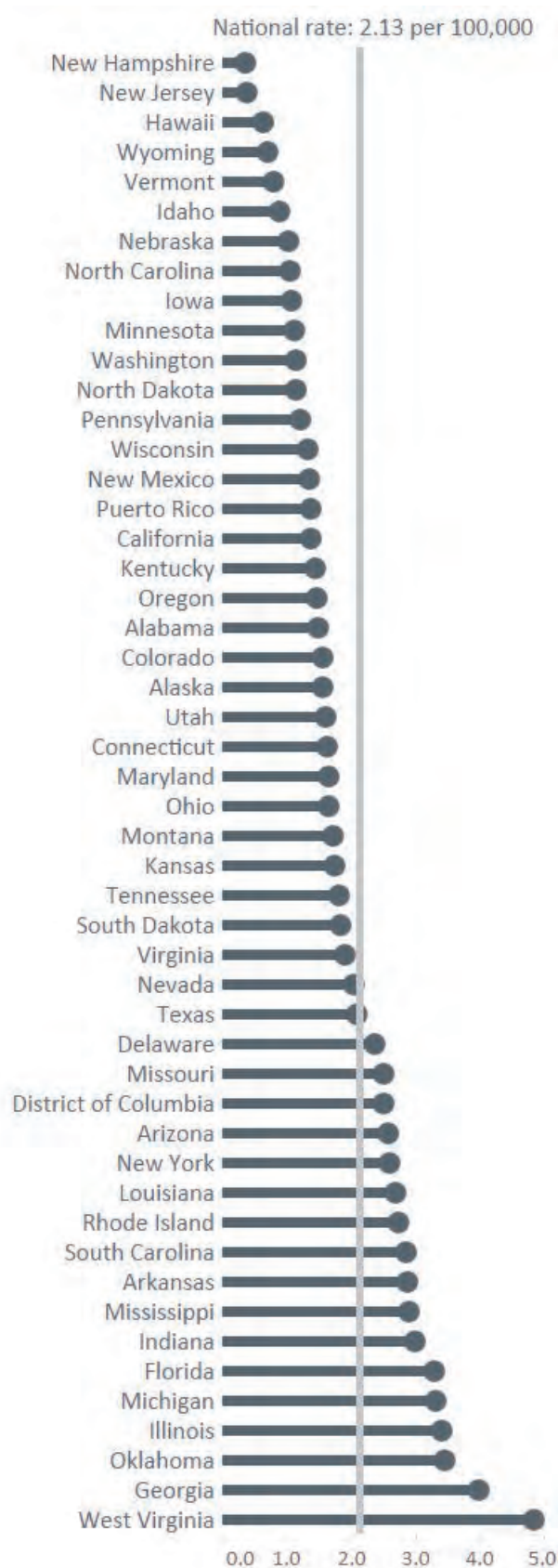
⁵⁴ Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., & Turner, H. A. (2007). Polyvictimization and trauma in a national longitudinal cohort. *Development and Psychopathology*, 19, 149–166.

**Figure II-1. Child Victim Rate per 1,000 Children, 2014
(N=52 States)***



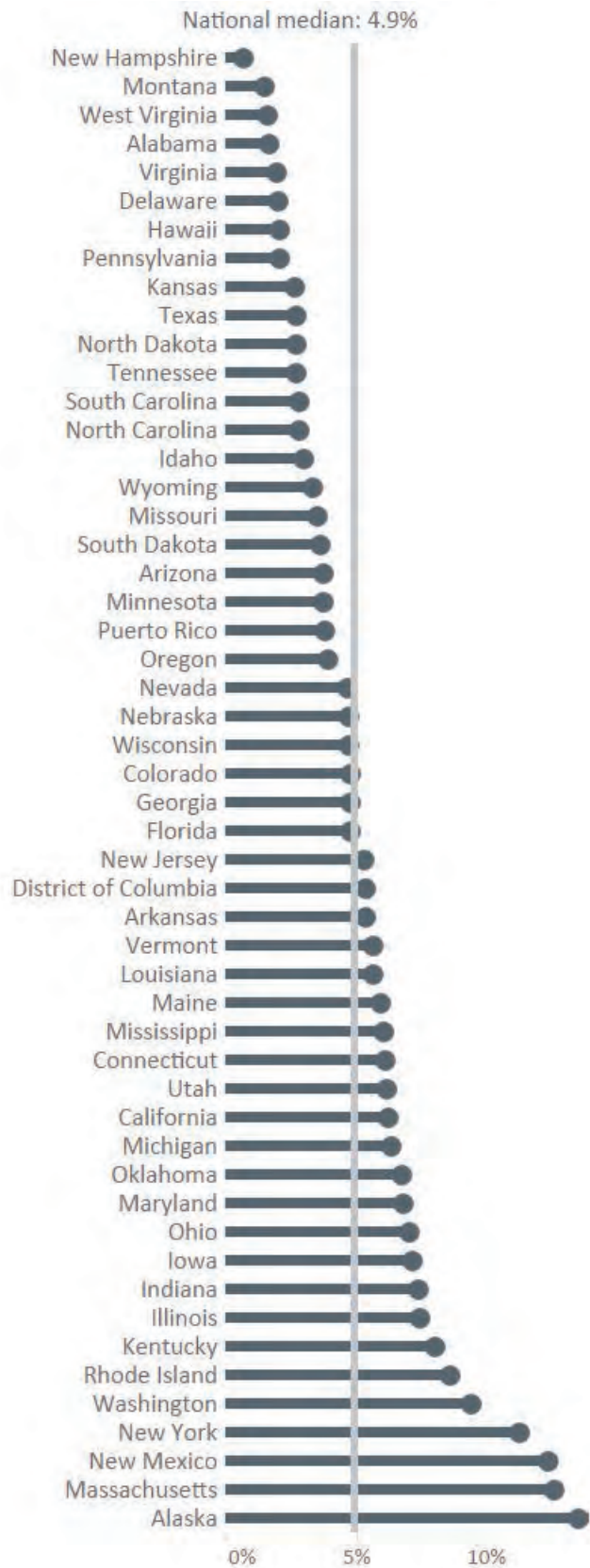
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

**Figure II-2. Child Fatality Rate per 100,000 Children, 2014
(N=50 States)***



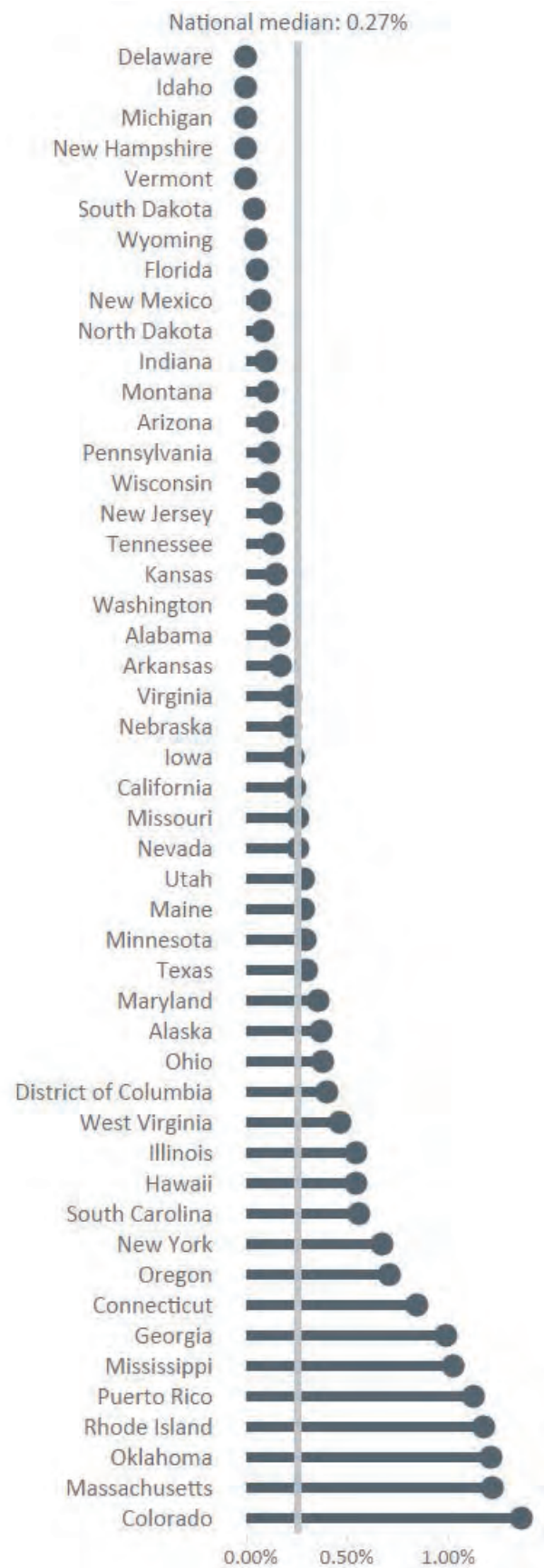
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure II-3. Percent of Children Experiencing a Recurrence of Maltreatment within 6 Months, 2014 (N=52 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.
Note: For these measures, a lower value indicates better performance.

Figure II-4. Percent of Children Experiencing Maltreatment in Foster Care, 2014 (N=47 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.
Note: For these measures, a lower value indicates better performance.

Table II-5. Outcome 1.1: Percent of Children Experiencing a Recurrence of Maltreatment Within 6 Months, 2010–2014 (N=51 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alabama	1.2%	1.1%	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	38.9%
Alaska	7.1%	8.2%	12.2%	12.9%	13.9%	94.4%
Arizona	3.3%	4.6%	4.6%	5.4%	3.8%	16.9%
Arkansas	6.2%	7.7%	6.4%	5.7%	5.5%	-11.1%
California	6.8%	7.0%	6.7%	6.3%	6.4%	-6.4%
Colorado	4.3%	4.5%	4.4%	4.5%	4.9%	14.8%
Connecticut	7.4%	6.6%	5.6%	6.1%	6.3%	-14.8%
Delaware	2.9%	2.2%	2.5%	3.1%	2.1%	-27.4%
District of Columbia	5.9%	6.2%	4.5%	5.3%	5.5%	-6.7%
Florida	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	5.9%	4.9%	-31.5%
Georgia	2.8%	3.2%	3.3%	4.2%	4.9%	72.5%
Hawaii	2.4%	2.4%	1.9%	1.1%	2.1%	-9.5%
Idaho	3.0%	3.3%	3.8%	2.9%	3.1%	2.1%
Illinois	6.6%	6.6%	7.2%	7.0%	7.7%	15.9%
Indiana	6.8%	6.7%	6.8%	7.1%	7.6%	11.9%
Iowa	9.3%	8.5%	7.3%	8.0%	7.4%	-20.3%
Kansas	2.7%	6.0%	3.4%	2.9%	2.7%	1.7%
Kentucky	5.3%	5.1%	6.2%	5.9%	8.2%	56.1%
Louisiana	4.6%	5.2%	5.3%	6.5%	5.8%	25.9%
Maine	6.2%	4.3%	6.3%	6.3%	6.1%	-1.7%
Maryland	3.4%	6.9%	7.1%	7.2%	7.0%	106.8%
Massachusetts	8.5%	8.1%	8.5%	9.0%	12.9%	52.7%
Michigan	6.6%	6.8%	7.2%	6.7%	6.5%	-1.5%
Minnesota	5.0%	5.6%	3.8%	3.5%	3.9%	-23.0%
Mississippi	6.0%	7.4%	6.8%	6.5%	6.2%	4.0%
Missouri	2.7%	3.3%	2.1%	3.4%	3.6%	34.1%
Montana	3.7%	3.8%	3.4%	4.3%	1.5%	-59.1%
Nebraska	7.9%	7.7%	7.4%	6.2%	4.9%	-38.2%
Nevada	5.5%	6.4%	4.8%	3.8%	4.8%	-13.4%
New Hampshire	2.8%	4.7%	1.7%	1.8%	0.7%	-74.9%
New Jersey	5.7%	5.2%	5.1%	5.8%	5.5%	-3.1%
New Mexico	8.3%	9.9%	9.0%	11.5%	12.7%	53.5%
New York	12.3%	12.2%	12.4%	11.7%	11.6%	-6.3%
North Carolina	2.5%	3.3%	2.1%	1.9%	2.9%	15.5%
North Dakota	1.4%	1.4%	2.6%	4.6%	2.8%	102.3%
Ohio	7.0%	7.7%	7.6%	6.9%	7.2%	3.2%
Oklahoma	5.9%	6.9%	6.2%	8.5%	6.9%	17.3%
Pennsylvania	2.6%	2.0%	2.6%	1.9%	2.1%	-18.3%
Puerto Rico	2.7%	4.5%	5.1%	4.6%	3.9%	44.2%
Rhode Island	7.7%	8.5%	6.9%	8.2%	8.8%	14.4%
South Carolina	3.2%	3.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.9%	-10.5%
South Dakota	4.6%	5.6%	5.6%	4.5%	3.7%	-18.2%
Tennessee	3.3%	3.0%	2.7%	2.4%	2.8%	-13.5%
Texas	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%	2.8%	-2.9%
Utah	6.9%	5.6%	4.6%	6.3%	6.3%	-8.6%
Vermont	1.6%	4.8%	6.3%	8.2%	5.8%	254.0%
Virginia	2.4%	2.3%	2.7%	3.1%	2.0%	-15.9%
Washington	6.3%	5.8%	7.5%	7.9%	9.7%	53.2%
West Virginia	4.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%	1.6%	-62.9%
Wisconsin	5.6%	4.6%	4.4%	4.0%	4.9%	-13.9%
Wyoming	2.0%	1.0%	1.4%	0.8%	3.4%	74.0%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Note: For this outcome, a lower value indicates improved performance.

Table II-6. Outcome 2.1: Percent of Children Experiencing Maltreatment in Foster Care, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alabama	0.04%	0.18%	0.18%	0.09%	0.17%	379.0%
Alaska	0.51%	0.41%	0.92%	0.99%	0.39%	-24.0%
Arizona	0.19%	0.09%	0.08%	0.21%	0.11%	-40.9%
Arkansas	0.33%	0.19%	0.13%	0.16%	0.18%	-45.8%
California	0.32%	0.30%	0.23%	0.25%	0.25%	-19.7%
Colorado	0.54%	0.66%	0.41%	0.74%	1.42%	161.0%
Connecticut	0.90%	0.73%	0.49%	0.93%	0.88%	-1.2%
Delaware	0.25%	0.08%	0.15%	0.43%	0.00	-100.0%
District of Columbia	0.28%	0.2%	0.35%	0.52%	0.42%	47.5%
Florida	0.82%	0.7%	0.61%	0.98%	0.06%	-92.7%
Hawaii	0.74%	0.59%	0.14%	0.34%	0.57%	-23.5%
Illinois	0.39%	0.45%	0.43%	0.88%	0.57%	46.1%
Indiana	0.37%	0.23%	0.13%	0.13%	0.11%	-70.5%
Iowa	0.37%	0.54%	0.35%	0.35%	0.25%	-33.1%
Kansas	0.09%	0.11%	0.20%	0.29%	0.16%	81.3%
Maine	0.55%	0.34%	0.14%	0.49%	0.30%	-44.7%
Maryland	0.25%	0.69%	0.48%	0.46%	0.37%	52.5%
Massachusetts	0.78%	0.70%	0.93%	1.05%	1.27%	62.8%
Minnesota	0.23%	0.34%	0.41%	0.25%	0.31%	31.1%
Mississippi	1.88%	1.59%	1.60%	0.95%	1.07%	-43.2%
Missouri	0.42%	0.02%	0.25%	0.34%	0.27%	-37.0%
Montana	0.11%	0.18%	0.30%	0.18%	0.11%	-2.0%
Nebraska	0.39%	0.28%	0.46%	0.36%	0.23%	-39.7%
Nevada	0.26%	0.41%	0.66%	0.47%	0.27%	3.8%
New Hampshire	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A
New Jersey	0.15%	0.13%	0.23%	0.34%	0.13%	-8.8%
New Mexico	0.32%	0.36%	0.62%	0.32%	0.07%	-77.7%
New York	1.91%	1.38%	1.19%	0.90%	0.70%	-63.3%
North Dakota	0.00%	0.06%	0.59%	0.10%	0.09%	N/A
Ohio	0.39%	0.39%	0.50%	0.56%	0.40%	2.9%
Oklahoma	0.79%	0.48%	0.89%	1.19%	1.27%	59.7%
Pennsylvania	0.13%	0.07%	0.14%	0.11%	0.12%	-12.4%
Puerto Rico	0.45%	0.04%	0.09%	1.34%	1.18%	162.0%
Rhode Island	0.97%	1.23%	1.04%	1.13%	1.23%	27.1%
South Carolina	0.43%	0.41%	0.43%	0.43%	0.58%	33.9%
South Dakota	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.09%	0.05%	-56.1%
Tennessee	0.04%	0.11%	0.07%	0.11%	0.14%	264.6%
Texas	0.10%	0.19%	0.27%	0.29%	0.32%	204.7%
Utah	0.55%	0.39%	0.08%	0.25%	0.30%	-45.1%
Vermont	0.06%	0.19%	0.00%	0.12%	0.00%	-100.0%
Virginia	0.18%	0.26%	0.16%	0.21%	0.23%	31.6%
Washington	0.20%	0.19%	0.33%	0.32%	0.16%	-19.3%
West Virginia	0.30%	0.19%	0.20%	0.27%	0.49%	62.7%
Wisconsin	0.35%	0.34%	0.12%	0.07%	0.12%	-67.1%
Wyoming	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	N/A

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Note: For this outcome, a lower value indicates improved performance.

III: Finding Permanent Homes for Children in Foster Care

When foster care is necessary to ensure a child’s safety and well-being, state child welfare agencies are tasked with the responsibility of working with families and the courts to return children to their homes or to find other permanent homes in a timely manner.⁵⁵ Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care, encompasses these permanency goals for children and youth.

This chapter presents national permanency results for the general foster care population, children with disabilities who are in foster care, and children and youth who have been in foster care for long periods of time. Contextual information regarding the age and race/ethnicity of children in care, entering care, and exiting care is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

For the purposes of the Child Welfare Outcomes Report data indicators, a child achieves permanency when he or she is reported as discharged from foster care to one of the following arrangements:

- Reunified with parents or primary caretakers⁵⁶
- Living with other relatives
- Living with a legal guardian
- Legally adopted

State performance in finding permanent homes for children is assessed using the following data for each state: (1) the number of children in foster care, (2) the percentage of children in foster care who achieve permanency, and (3) the percentage of children in foster care who exit to emancipation.⁵⁷ This chapter presents key findings of the analyses of these data across states.⁵⁸ The source of most of the data presented in this chapter is the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).⁵⁹

RANGE OF PERFORMANCE IN ACHIEVING PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Nationally, approximately 238,000 children exited foster care in 2014. Table III-1 provides a breakdown of the foster care discharge reasons reported for these children.

Table III-1. Foster Care Discharge Reasons, 2014 (N=52 States)*

Discharge Reason	Number of Children**	Percent of Total Exits (N=238,000)***
Adoption	50,000	20.9%
Emancipation	22,000	9.2%
Guardianship	21,000	8.8%
Reunification	133,000	55.6%
Other	5,000	2.1%
Total	239,000	96.7%

* All numbers presented in this table are rounded to the nearest thousand.

**The total of the number of children does not equal the sum of exits by discharge reason because it includes cases in which the discharge reason was missing.

*** The percent of total exits does not total 100 percent due to rounding and to cases in which the discharge reason was missing.

⁵⁵ For the purposes of this report, “foster care” refers to a variety of out-of-home placement settings, including foster family homes, group homes, shelters, residential treatment facilities, and similar placements for children who are placed away from their parents or guardians in 24-hour substitute care and under the placement and care responsibility of the state child welfare agency for at least 24 hours (see 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II).

⁵⁶ For the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, the discharge reasons of “reunification with parents or primary caretakers” and “living with other relatives” are combined into the category of “reunification.”

⁵⁷ Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for federal fiscal year (FY) 2014 (October 1, 2013–September 30, 2014).

⁵⁸ In this report, the designation of “state” includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure.

⁵⁹ Data used in this report may be different from other sources for a number of reasons, especially the timing of data collection. All AFCARS data used in this report are current as of April 16, 2015.

According to table III-1, 204,000 (85.4 percent) of the children exiting foster care were discharged to a permanent home in 2014 (i.e., were discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship). State performance with regard to finding permanent homes for children in foster care is addressed through a number of outcome measures, shown in table III-2.

Table III-2. Range of State Performance, 2014
Outcome 3: Achieving Permanency for Children in Foster Care

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range (Percent)
Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=48 states)	83.1%	89.0%	91.5%	67.1–96.0%
Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=48 states)	70.3%	78.4%	84.7%	48.9–94.0%
Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=48 states)	58.8%	63.9%	73.1%	35.5–91.8%
Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care in the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care? (N=48 states)**	13.2%	20.0%	26.7%	6.0–42.3%

*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all of the relevant years.

** For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

Measures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 assess permanency for children at the time of discharge from foster care. The data in table III-4 suggest that, in 2014, states were generally successful in achieving permanent homes for children discharged from foster care. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that a central goal in child welfare is to find permanent, secure homes for 100 percent of the children who must enter foster care.

Children with disabilities

For 2014, a long-standing pattern continues in which states tend to be considerably more successful in finding permanent homes for the general foster care population (with a success rate of 89.0 percent) than for children with diagnosed disabilities (with a success rate of 78.4 percent; see measures 3.1 and 3.2 in table III-2). This disparity has been a consistent finding in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports. Because children with diagnosed disabilities often need higher levels of care, they are more likely to be placed in residential treatment centers and are therefore less likely to achieve permanent placements with families. The current finding in this report on the difficulties in establishing permanency for children with disabilities suggests that agencies should continue to review their data and current practices to consider whether there are ways to increase placing these children in permanent homes.

Older youth in foster care

Another demographic for whom states struggle to establish permanency is children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12. Compared to 89.0 percent of the general foster care population who exited foster care to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship in 2014, the percent of older youth exiting to permanency was only 63.9 (see measures 3.1 and 3.3 in table III-2).

States are less successful in establishing permanency for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 as compared to the entire foster care population.

Older children in foster care may face a number of age-specific barriers to permanency.⁶⁰ For example, there may be a shortage of families that have been identified who are willing and able to provide permanent homes for older youth. This could be due to a number of factors, but one likely contributor is the high rate of risky behavior among older youth in the foster care system. Older youth transitioning from foster care have relatively high rates of substance use referrals, incarceration, and giving birth to or fathering a child.⁶¹ These high-risk youth require more resources, and there may be a lack of families willing and able to provide them with the services that they need.

Analysts have also identified agency practices that may act as barriers to permanency for older youth. Specifically, child welfare agencies may lack the commitment needed in order to establish permanency options for older youth in care, believing that these individuals are unadoptable.⁶² Additionally, some agencies may be focusing on providing independent living services to

⁶⁰ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). *Enhancing permanency for youth in out-of-home care*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/focus/enhancing/index.cfm>

⁶¹ For more information, see *National Youth in Transition Database Data Briefs* on the Children's Bureau website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/data-briefs>.

⁶² North American Council on Adoptable Children. (2009). *It's time to make older child adoption a reality: Because every child and youth deserves a family*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/MakeOlderChildAdoptionReality.pdf>

youth rather than finding permanency options. Although these types of services are an important component of preparing youth for adulthood, they are not sufficient for connecting them with permanent families.⁶³

Finally, youth themselves might show some resistance to permanency planning. If permanency planning involves the termination of their birth parents' rights, youth might be hesitant to form ties with new families, as many individuals still have emotional ties to their birth families. Youth also may be unaware of the long-term consequences of not having a family to turn to during their young adult years, causing feelings of apathy toward permanency.⁶⁴

Youth emancipating from foster care

Measure 3.4 focuses on youth who reach age 18 or exit foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation. These are youth for whom the state was unable to find a permanent home. Nationally, approximately 27,000 youth were emancipated from foster care in 2014. One of the issues addressed by these measures is the amount of time children were in foster care before emancipation.

The percentage of children exiting foster care who were reported to AFCARS as having a discharge reason of emancipation varies considerably across states.

In 2014, states with the lowest percentages of children exiting foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation were West Virginia (1.3 percent), Wyoming (1.8 percent), and Mississippi (3.6 percent). States with the highest percentages were Delaware (20.9 percent), Virginia (18.6 percent), and Maryland (17.2 percent). In 2014, the median across states for children exiting foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation was 7.9 percent.⁶⁵

The extensive variation across states in the percentage of children exiting foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation could be seen as a reflection of the differences across states in the ages of children entering foster care. For example, it could be expected differences across states in the ages of children entering foster care that there should be a strong correlation between a state having a high number of youth entering foster care and a state having a high percentage of foster youth exiting to emancipation). However, there was a relatively low correlation between the percentage of youth discharged from foster care who were emancipated and the percentage of children entering foster care in the state who were age 12 or older (Pearson's $r=.29$).

The data shown in table III-2 suggest that, in many states, a considerable percentage of children who were emancipated from foster care in 2014 were in foster care for long periods of time before they were emancipated (measure 3.4). In half of the states, 20.0 percent or more of the children emancipated from foster care were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care (measure 3.4).

CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF ACHIEVING PERMANENCY

Table III-3 presents the median performances across states for 2010 to 2014 on measures pertaining to achieving permanency for children in foster care. The table also presents a summary of the change in state performance between 2010 and 2014 on these measures. Change in performance over time was computed by using a percent change calculation.⁶⁶ These median performances and changes in performance over time should be viewed together in order to gain a better understanding of trends over time.

⁶³ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). *Enhancing permanency for youth in out-of-home care*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/focus/enhancing/index.cfm>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ The median of 7.9 percent refers to the median across states for all children exiting foster care to emancipation. This should not be confused with the median for measure 3.4, which is the subpopulation of the total number of children discharged to emancipation.

⁶⁶ Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.0 percent in 2010 and 4.9 percent in 2014, so the formula is $[(4.9-5.0)/5.0] \times 100 = 2.0$ percent decrease.

Table III-3. Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time, 2010–2014*
Outcome 3: Achieving Permanency for Children in Foster Care

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year (Percent)***					States That Improved in Performance	States That Declined in Performance
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010–2014	2010–2014
Measure 3.1: Percentage of all children exiting foster care to a permanent home (N=45 states)	86.8%	87.3%	87.7%	89.6%	89.2%	7 states (18%)	2 states (4%)
Measure 3.2: Percentage of all children with a diagnosed disability exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=41 states)	76.1%	77.7%	78.7%	79.3%	78.9%	16 states (39%)	6 states (15%)
Measure 3.3: Percentage of all children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 who were discharged to a permanent home (N=45 states)	65.2%	65.5%	64.8%	66.8%	63.9%	17 states (38%)	9 states (20%)
Measure 3.4: Percentage of all children who were emancipated from foster care who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger (N=45 states) ****	23.8%	25.1%	23.3%	21.3%	20.0%	32 states (71%)	8 states (18%)

* In accordance with standard procedure in this report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

** The definitions for the measures in all cross-year comparison tables in this report have been shortened due to the complexity of the tables. Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table III-2 or appendix B. Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all of the relevant years.

*** The 2014 data in this table may be different from the data in table III-2 due to differences in the number of states used for each analysis.

**** For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

As shown in table III-3, one of the most notable changes in performance between 2010 and 2014 is in the percentage of children who emancipated from foster care who entered care when they were age 12 or younger (measure 3.4). For this measure, 71 percent of states demonstrated improved performance between 2010 and 2014, and the national median improved from 23.3 to 20.0, a 15.8 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is desirable on this measure).

The majority of states showed improved performance in the percentage of children emancipated from foster care who entered care when they were age 12 or younger.

There also were improvements in the percentage of children with a diagnosed disability exiting to permanency (measure 3.2). For this measure, more than one-third of states (39 percent) showed improved performance, and the national median went from 76.1 percent in 2010 to 78.9 percent in 2014, a 3.6 percent increase.

The majority (80 percent) of states showed no change in performance on the percentage of children exiting foster care to a permanent home (measure 3.1). Additionally, there was little change across states in finding permanent homes for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 (measure 3.3), with the national median declining slightly (2.0 percent) from 2010 to 2014.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING ACHIEVING PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Some positive findings emerged in the data between 2010 and 2014 with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care. Consistent with previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, the measures assessing permanency for children at the time of discharge from foster care indicate that, across the states, the majority of children exiting foster care in 2014 were discharged to permanent homes (measure 3.1, median = 89.0 percent). One notable result was the percentage of states (39 percent) that demonstrated improvement in finding permanent homes for children with diagnosed disabilities (measure 3.2). Understanding the practices of successful states could provide useful guidance to states that are striving to improve performance in these areas.

States also showed significant progress in reducing the percentages of children exiting foster care to emancipation who entered foster care at age 12 or younger. Seventy-one percent of states demonstrated a reduction in the number of children emancipating from foster care who entered foster care at age 12 or younger (measure 3.4). Historically, many states have struggled in this area. It is encouraging to note that many states are making progress in their efforts to find permanent homes for children in care for longer periods of time, and improvement in this measure may be a reflection of those efforts. However, there is still a great deal of room for improvement, and these continue to be areas that call for some additional consideration from state program administrators and policymakers.

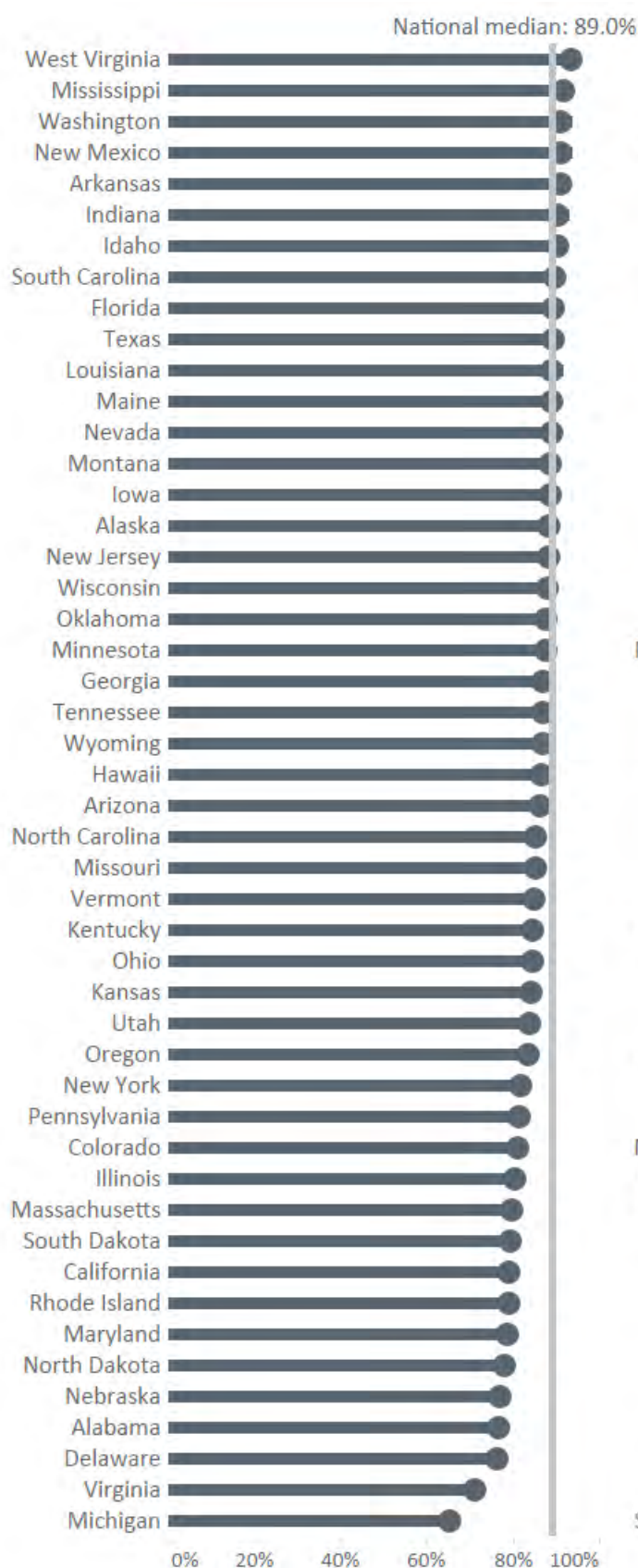
Interestingly, however, there appeared to be no correlation between exits to emancipation and rates of entry of children aged 12 and older. In examining the variation in rates of discharge to emancipation in states, it might be expected that states that take more adolescents and older youth into foster care would have more exits to emancipation. This was not the case. The percentage of children who were emancipated from foster care was found to have a weak relationship with the percentage

of children entering foster care in the state who were age 12 or older (Pearson's $r=.29$). This finding is consistent with similar analyses conducted for prior Child Welfare Outcomes Reports.

Consistent with findings from prior years, states continue to struggle with finding permanent homes for children with disabilities (table III-4: measure 3.2, median = 78.4 percent, range = 48.9 to 94.0 percent) and for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 (table III-4: measure 3.3, median = 63.9 percent, range = 35.5 to 91.8 percent). This has been a consistent finding of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, and it suggests that special efforts are still needed to eliminate some of the disparities in the achievement of permanency for these two groups of children.

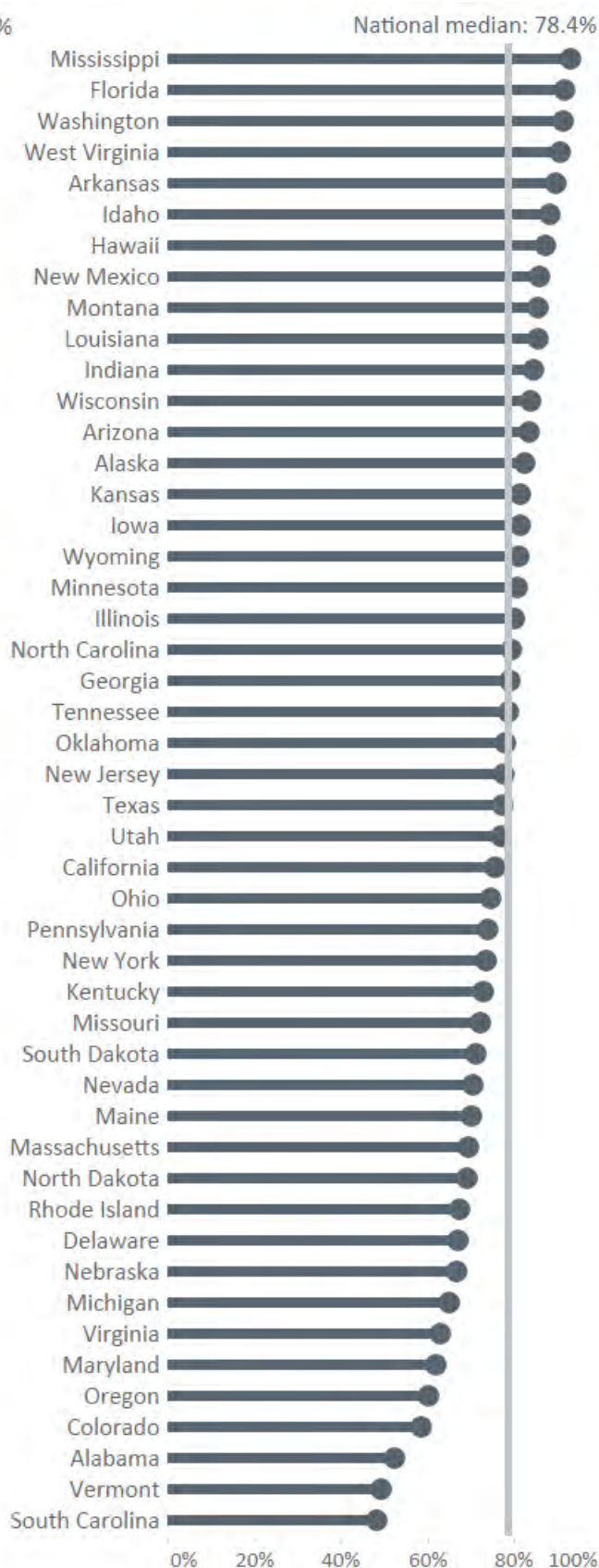
The end of this chapter displays outcome-based visuals related to finding permanent homes for children in foster care, including state performance on Outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. Additional information, including exits from care by race and ethnicity, and individual state data, are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

**Figure III-1. Percent of Children Exiting to Permanency, 2014
(N=48 States)***



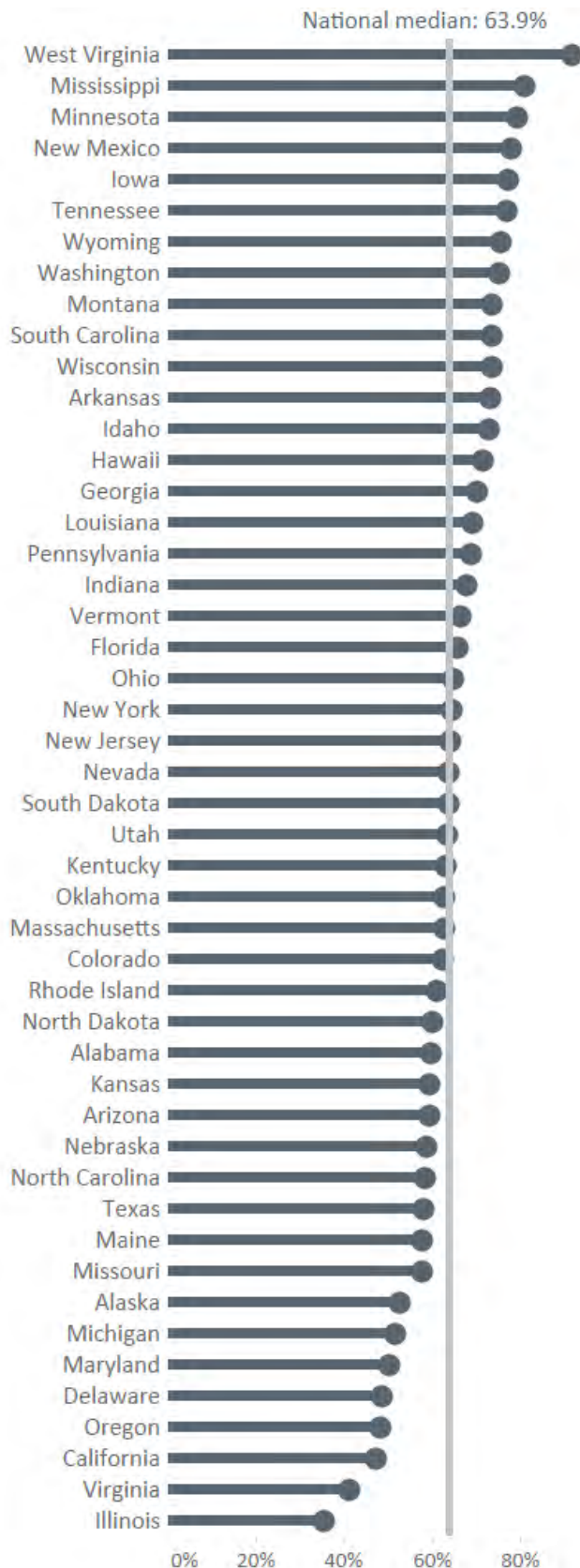
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure III-2. Percent of Children With a Diagnosed Disability Exiting to Permanency, 2014 (N=48 States)*



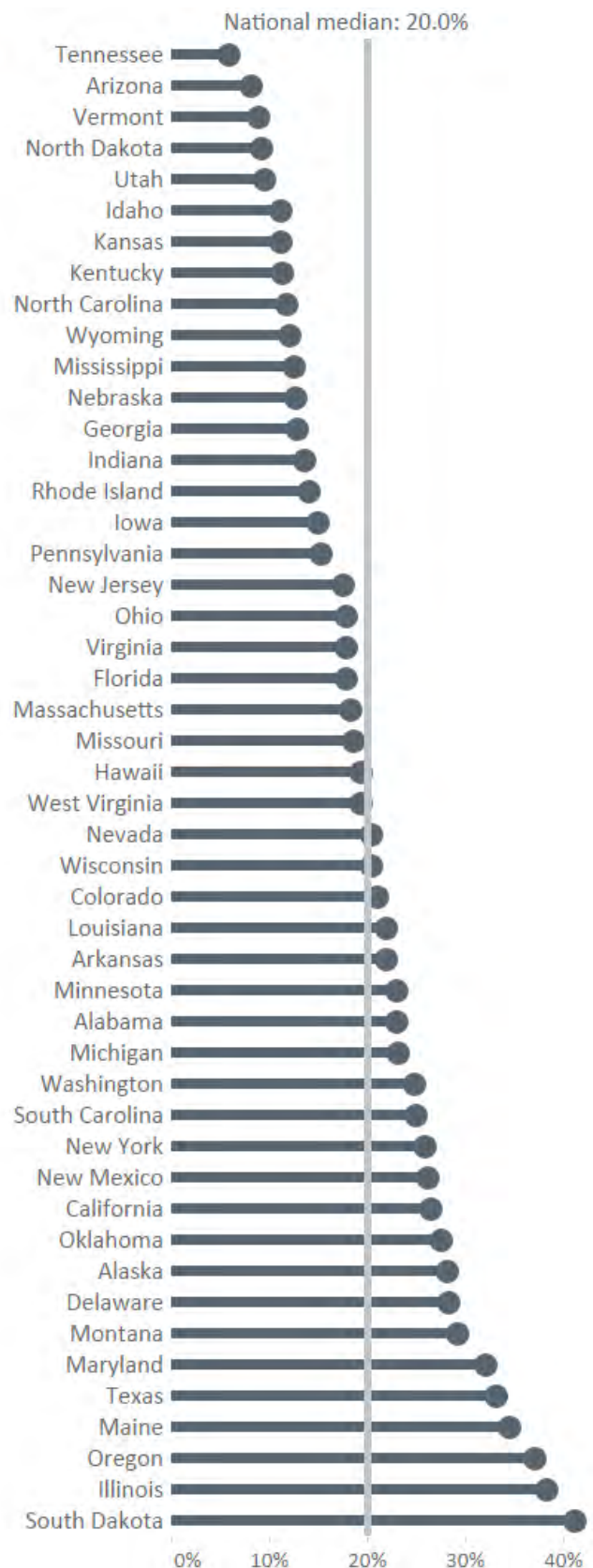
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure III-3. Percent of Children Age 12+ Exiting to Permanency, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure III-4. Percent of Children Exiting to Emancipation Who Entered at Age 12 or Younger, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Table III-4. Outcome 3.1: Percent of Children Exiting to Permanency, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	88.0%	89.6%	86.7%	89.8%	91.0%	3.4%
Arizona	86.8%	87.3%	86.6%	89.1%	88.8%	2.4%
Arkansas	91.6%	93.0%	93.0%	93.5%	93.6%	2.1%
California	81.4%	83.2%	84.6%	81.0%	81.5%	0.1%
Colorado	84.9%	84.5%	85.3%	84.8%	83.3%	-1.9%
Delaware	77.8%	76.5%	82.8%	77.7%	78.6%	1.0%
Florida	90.4%	90.4%	91.4%	92.5%	91.9%	1.7%
Georgia	88.5%	87.8%	89.0%	89.6%	89.6%	1.2%
Hawaii	88.8%	89.9%	90.9%	91.5%	89.2%	0.4%
Idaho	91.0%	90.2%	90.6%	92.5%	92.8%	2.0%
Illinois	78.2%	77.1%	82.1%	78.9%	82.6%	5.7%
Indiana	89.7%	90.7%	92.1%	94.1%	93.1%	3.7%
Iowa	88.7%	90.1%	90.2%	90.2%	91.2%	2.9%
Kansas	83.1%	85.2%	85.2%	85.5%	86.6%	4.1%
Kentucky	84.2%	86.4%	87.1%	86.0%	87.0%	3.4%
Louisiana	92.3%	91.7%	91.2%	93.5%	91.7%	-0.7%
Maine	83.8%	89.4%	87.7%	87.9%	91.5%	9.3%
Maryland	76.5%	78.1%	80.0%	80.7%	81.0%	5.8%
Massachusetts	81.9%	81.4%	82.6%	83.1%	82.2%	0.3%
Michigan	85.4%	87.0%	87.7%	87.2%	67.1%	-21.4%
Minnesota	85.9%	88.3%	88.1%	89.6%	90.1%	5.0%
Mississippi	93.6%	94.8%	94.0%	94.4%	94.2%	0.6%
Missouri	86.0%	87.0%	88.3%	88.6%	87.7%	1.9%
Montana	85.7%	88.1%	85.7%	91.2%	91.2%	6.4%
Nebraska	86.3%	87.2%	85.9%	87.8%	79.3%	-8.0%
Nevada	89.1%	90.5%	90.7%	90.4%	91.4%	2.6%
New Jersey	87.8%	87.6%	89.5%	90.4%	91.0%	3.7%
New Mexico	92.1%	92.2%	93.5%	94.7%	93.8%	1.9%
New York	84.0%	83.2%	83.2%	83.1%	84.0%	0.0%
North Carolina	86.8%	87.2%	87.5%	88.4%	87.8%	1.2%
North Dakota	70.4%	79.6%	81.1%	81.9%	80.2%	14.0%
Ohio	83.5%	83.8%	81.5%	84.8%	86.9%	4.1%
Oklahoma	89.3%	88.3%	89.5%	89.8%	90.3%	1.1%
Oregon	87.2%	87.1%	87.4%	90.6%	85.9%	-1.5%
Rhode Island	85.3%	84.6%	84.2%	87.2%	81.3%	-4.7%
South Carolina	89.2%	88.9%	92.4%	91.4%	92.2%	3.4%
South Dakota	75.7%	77.5%	74.0%	82.7%	81.6%	7.8%
Tennessee	89.1%	87.6%	90.2%	90.9%	89.6%	0.5%
Texas	87.5%	90.4%	91.8%	91.9%	91.9%	5.0%
Utah	84.7%	84.0%	84.7%	85.2%	86.4%	2.0%
Vermont	83.6%	86.5%	86.7%	85.9%	87.4%	4.5%
Virginia	70.3%	72.8%	67.5%	71.2%	73.3%	4.3%
Washington	90.4%	91.0%	92.4%	93.2%	93.8%	3.8%
Wisconsin	87.1%	87.2%	87.8%	90.0%	90.5%	3.9%
Wyoming	89.7%	89.8%	90.2%	89.7%	89.3%	-0.5%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table III-5. Outcome 3.2: Percent of Children With Diagnosed Disabilities Exiting to Permanency, 2010–2014 (N=41 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	86.4%	84.3%	84.7%	84.7%	83.6%	-3.2%
Arkansas	80.7%	92.0%	94.0%	91.6%	90.6%	12.2%
California	77.5%	79.7%	81.4%	75.8%	76.7%	-1.0%
Colorado	82.4%	63.0%	71.1%	70.1%	59.4%	-28.0%
Delaware	57.6%	62.7%	72.1%	61.9%	68.0%	18.0%
Florida	80.9%	82.1%	85.2%	88.1%	92.9%	14.7%
Georgia	80.2%	81.4%	82.9%	81.5%	79.9%	-0.4%
Hawaii	79.7%	82.6%	81.7%	85.6%	88.3%	10.8%
Idaho	85.4%	81.4%	84.2%	81.3%	89.2%	4.4%
Illinois	45.5%	42.6%	51.0%	50.0%	81.1%	78.5%
Indiana	85.2%	85.2%	89.8%	89.3%	85.5%	0.3%
Iowa	75.0%	78.0%	81.3%	79.3%	82.4%	9.9%
Kansas	80.2%	81.7%	82.0%	81.9%	82.5%	2.9%
Kentucky	73.1%	78.1%	76.7%	74.1%	73.9%	1.0%
Louisiana	79.9%	75.7%	71.7%	82.1%	86.5%	8.3%
Maine	65.6%	75.5%	72.3%	68.6%	71.1%	8.4%
Maryland	63.0%	61.5%	65.5%	64.5%	62.8%	-0.3%
Michigan	75.8%	78.7%	80.2%	79.5%	65.8%	-13.1%
Minnesota	75.4%	80.7%	80.9%	82.2%	81.5%	8.1%
Mississippi	90.9%	90.2%	92.3%	93.3%	94.0%	3.4%
Missouri	75.5%	77.5%	79.4%	75.8%	73.0%	-3.4%
Montana	72.7%	82.7%	81.4%	82.8%	86.7%	19.2%
Nebraska	80.2%	81.8%	78.0%	82.7%	67.5%	-15.8%
Nevada	71.3%	76.7%	78.7%	77.3%	71.5%	0.3%
New Jersey	78.1%	76.5%	79.2%	80.5%	78.7%	0.8%
New Mexico	89.8%	87.6%	87.8%	91.1%	86.9%	-3.2%
North Carolina	75.5%	75.8%	77.7%	77.7%	80.4%	6.5%
North Dakota	62.4%	71.7%	73.5%	69.9%	69.9%	12.0%
Ohio	64.4%	67.7%	67.6%	73.3%	75.5%	17.2%
Oklahoma	76.1%	76.8%	76.4%	76.3%	78.9%	3.6%
Oregon	71.7%	72.2%	67.6%	70.7%	61.1%	-14.8%
Rhode Island	77.6%	76.6%	71.0%	80.4%	68.1%	-12.3%
South Carolina	57.4%	48.4%	63.6%	58.4%	48.9%	-14.8%
Tennessee	78.1%	75.0%	75.9%	77.9%	79.7%	2.0%
Texas	77.0%	77.7%	77.7%	76.9%	78.2%	1.5%
Utah	75.9%	75.1%	76.5%	75.3%	77.9%	2.6%
Vermont	51.2%	47.1%	64.7%	71.4%	50.0%	-2.3%
Virginia	52.1%	56.8%	54.7%	59.1%	63.6%	22.2%
Washington	76.0%	82.1%	84.6%	91.2%	92.4%	21.6%
Wisconsin	80.8%	79.8%	80.8%	84.7%	84.9%	5.1%
Wyoming	83.6%	90.4%	86.8%	86.1%	82.1%	-1.8%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table III-6. Outcome 3.3: Percent of Children Age 12 and Older Exiting to Permanency, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	44.2%	54.6%	46.9%	50.9%	52.8%	19.6%
Arizona	61.4%	58.3%	56.1%	61.7%	59.3%	-3.4%
Arkansas	71.6%	71.9%	73.3%	73.9%	73.2%	2.3%
California	55.9%	57.2%	56.6%	50.0%	47.3%	-15.5%
Colorado	69.2%	67.4%	68.0%	66.8%	62.5%	-9.7%
Delaware	42.3%	42.0%	57.2%	45.1%	48.5%	14.9%
Florida	59.2%	61.4%	63.3%	67.3%	65.8%	11.1%
Georgia	69.9%	66.7%	68.1%	68.8%	70.1%	0.4%
Hawaii	71.5%	73.5%	77.1%	75.2%	71.7%	0.3%
Idaho	68.9%	70.7%	69.4%	70.9%	73.0%	5.9%
Illinois	38.3%	33.6%	37.5%	31.0%	35.5%	-7.3%
Indiana	71.0%	69.0%	74.6%	75.6%	68.0%	-4.1%
Iowa	78.1%	79.2%	77.2%	76.3%	77.3%	-0.9%
Kansas	59.1%	62.8%	60.0%	60.0%	59.3%	0.3%
Kentucky	61.3%	65.1%	65.7%	60.9%	63.2%	3.2%
Louisiana	77.2%	74.3%	71.7%	77.3%	69.2%	-10.3%
Maine	46.5%	64.2%	53.1%	48.0%	57.7%	24.2%
Maryland	47.2%	52.2%	54.1%	52.4%	50.2%	6.4%
Massachusetts	65.7%	65.1%	66.6%	67.1%	62.7%	-4.5%
Michigan	65.4%	67.3%	64.7%	62.2%	51.8%	-20.8%
Minnesota	74.3%	78.4%	77.4%	79.1%	79.4%	6.9%
Mississippi	82.1%	85.0%	81.0%	84.4%	80.9%	-1.5%
Missouri	60.3%	60.1%	60.9%	59.3%	57.7%	-4.3%
Montana	62.0%	71.9%	57.1%	69.4%	73.6%	18.7%
Nebraska	74.0%	75.3%	73.2%	73.4%	58.9%	-20.4%
Nevada	58.7%	60.4%	58.5%	61.0%	64.0%	9.0%
New Jersey	58.9%	59.1%	63.5%	65.8%	64.1%	8.9%
New Mexico	72.8%	71.3%	76.3%	80.1%	78.0%	7.2%
New York	67.1%	65.5%	64.8%	61.6%	64.6%	-3.7%
North Carolina	59.9%	58.0%	59.2%	57.0%	58.3%	-2.6%
North Dakota	58.8%	67.7%	65.2%	62.8%	60.2%	2.2%
Ohio	60.8%	61.9%	62.8%	65.2%	64.7%	6.5%
Oklahoma	64.0%	59.0%	62.8%	61.7%	62.8%	-1.9%
Oregon	58.8%	59.3%	60.7%	64.3%	48.4%	-17.6%
Rhode Island	73.0%	71.5%	69.8%	73.8%	61.2%	-16.3%
South Carolina	66.8%	66.5%	74.0%	69.7%	73.6%	10.1%
South Dakota	65.2%	63.8%	58.6%	68.7%	63.9%	-2.0%
Tennessee	78.7%	75.4%	79.2%	79.4%	76.8%	-2.4%
Texas	45.0%	52.7%	56.7%	58.5%	58.1%	29.1%
Utah	57.7%	56.3%	60.2%	61.7%	63.5%	9.9%
Vermont	68.4%	74.5%	71.5%	67.1%	66.5%	-2.7%
Virginia	33.4%	38.1%	34.4%	41.5%	41.1%	22.8%
Washington	67.9%	69.7%	71.0%	74.4%	75.4%	11.0%
Wisconsin	71.3%	69.3%	69.2%	73.2%	73.6%	3.2%
Wyoming	84.8%	79.4%	79.8%	79.6%	75.7%	-10.7%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table III-7. Outcome 3.4: Percent of Children Exiting to Emancipation Who Entered Care Under Age 12, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	23.8%	31.3%	27.1%	25.0%	29.0%	22.2%
Arizona	16.4%	13.4%	9.1%	9.4%	8.4%	-48.4%
Arkansas	18.6%	18.3%	20.2%	24.8%	22.7%	21.5%
California	39.0%	37.3%	30.6%	29.7%	27.3%	-30.0%
Colorado	21.4%	20.8%	19.8%	15.7%	21.7%	1.2%
Delaware	19.1%	16.8%	21.3%	22.7%	29.2%	52.3%
Florida	23.8%	24.9%	20.5%	18.9%	18.4%	-22.7%
Georgia	28.5%	25.1%	17.5%	14.3%	13.3%	-53.6%
Hawaii	32.8%	26.3%	28.6%	30.9%	20.0%	-38.9%
Idaho	20.6%	32.6%	11.5%	20.6%	11.5%	-44.3%
Illinois	50.2%	49.1%	43.8%	40.3%	39.5%	-21.5%
Indiana	18.4%	17.5%	26.4%	21.3%	14.1%	-23.2%
Iowa	22.4%	23.8%	20.0%	18.5%	15.5%	-30.9%
Kansas	15.9%	19.8%	15.6%	15.2%	11.6%	-27.0%
Kentucky	12.3%	12.9%	11.3%	11.8%	11.8%	-4.6%
Louisiana	32.0%	31.6%	26.5%	31.2%	22.6%	-29.4%
Maine	42.0%	46.3%	41.6%	29.7%	35.5%	-15.5%
Maryland	46.4%	43.8%	39.7%	36.8%	33.1%	-28.7%
Massachusetts	25.0%	24.3%	23.5%	20.7%	18.9%	-24.2%
Michigan	33.7%	33.8%	29.0%	21.5%	23.8%	-29.3%
Minnesota	22.4%	21.9%	21.5%	19.5%	23.7%	6.1%
Mississippi	30.4%	21.6%	22.0%	23.5%	13.0%	-57.3%
Missouri	28.6%	28.8%	23.3%	21.3%	19.1%	-33.2%
Montana	48.4%	52.1%	35.8%	37.3%	30.0%	-38.0%
Nebraska	12.2%	11.0%	11.5%	8.9%	13.1%	7.9%
Nevada	20.3%	24.8%	21.5%	20.8%	21.0%	3.5%
New Jersey	25.9%	24.2%	24.7%	20.4%	18.1%	-30.1%
New Mexico	24.5%	23.2%	29.5%	18.0%	27.0%	10.5%
New York	33.9%	31.1%	28.9%	24.3%	26.6%	-21.6%
North Carolina	23.6%	15.7%	18.9%	12.6%	12.2%	-48.3%
North Dakota	22.0%	16.1%	9.7%	10.2%	9.5%	-57.0%
Ohio	27.2%	28.1%	36.5%	25.9%	18.3%	-32.6%
Oklahoma	43.7%	38.6%	36.5%	34.6%	28.4%	-34.9%
Oregon	49.6%	44.8%	39.2%	33.8%	38.2%	-23.0%
Rhode Island	23.4%	25.6%	27.0%	25.6%	14.6%	-37.9%
South Carolina	29.1%	31.4%	29.7%	26.9%	25.7%	-11.7%
South Dakota	32.1%	41.0%	37.9%	32.8%	42.3%	31.8%
Tennessee	6.3%	5.3%	3.0%	3.7%	6.0%	-4.7%
Texas	40.3%	39.5%	39.2%	36.9%	34.1%	-15.5%
Utah	14.7%	14.4%	17.0%	13.6%	9.8%	-33.5%
Vermont	21.6%	28.3%	20.6%	10.8%	9.2%	-57.4%
Virginia	20.7%	25.4%	21.2%	22.6%	18.3%	-11.3%
Washington	26.4%	27.8%	25.4%	25.5%	25.6%	-2.8%
Wisconsin	22.7%	21.9%	22.6%	20.1%	21.1%	-7.3%
Wyoming	5.0%	7.7%	0.0%	8.3%	12.5%	150.0%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance. Note: For this measure, a lower value indicates better performance.

IV: Achieving Timely Reunifications and Adoptions for Children in Foster Care

While chapter III broadly discussed the issue of permanency and noted some special issues for the diverse population of children and youth in foster care, this chapter focuses more specifically on the achievement of permanency through reunification and adoption. Timeliness of guardianships is not addressed in this chapter because the percentage of children who are discharged from foster care to guardianship is very small in almost all states.⁶⁷

Timeliness of achieving permanency for children in foster care is critical to their well-being.⁶⁸ This emphasis is reinforced and supported by federal policy and law, such as the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA), which stresses the importance of the timely identification of permanent homes for children taken into foster care.

CASEWORKER VISITS

Achieving permanency in a timely manner for children in foster care can be linked in part to the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children. During the first and second rounds of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs), an association was found between caseworker visits measures and positive outcomes for children in foster care. For example, frequent contact between the caseworker and the child (as indicated by positive ratings on Item 19 in the Round 2 CFSR onsite review instrument) was associated with better ratings on CFSR Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.⁶⁹ Based in part on these findings, the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-288) amended Title IV-B of the Act to include requirements for states to collect data on monthly caseworker visits for children in foster care.⁷⁰

The caseworker visits data presented in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report include the percentage of children in foster care visited each full month they were in care, as well as the proportion of those visits that occurred in the homes where the children were then living. Data for Monthly Caseworker Visits and Visits in the Home for 2012 to 2014 are shown in table IV-1.⁷¹

Table IV-1. Monthly Caseworker Visits and Visits in the Home, 2012–2014

Measure	Median (Percent)		
	2012	2013	2014
The percentage of children receiving monthly caseworker visits. (N=52 states)	94%	95%	95%
The percentage of the monthly visits that occurred in the home of the child. (N=51 states)	85%	87%	86%

Note that states reported caseworker visits data from 2007 to 2011 under the original reporting requirements.⁷² The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 (Pub.L. 112-34) modified those requirements, now in Sections 424(f) (1) and (2) and 479A(6) of the Act.⁷³ States were required to begin meeting these new performance requirements and using the new methodology for calculating caseworker visits data in 2012.⁷⁴ Because the new methodology limits data comparisons with prior years, caseworker visits data from 2010 and 2011 are not included in this report. The data regarding caseworker visits presented in this report are not CFSR onsite case review data but are derived from the data that states were required to report under the new monthly caseworker visits requirements in Pub. L. 112-34.

TIMELINESS OF REUNIFICATIONS⁷⁵

The assessment of timeliness of reunification is addressed through Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry. The wording of this outcome is intended to ensure that reunifications are not viewed as timely

⁶⁷ In this report, the designation of “state” includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure. The data presented throughout this chapter come from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), to which all states report.

⁶⁸ Lutz, L. L. (2003). *Achieving permanence for children in the child welfare system: Pioneering possibilities amidst daunting challenges*. Retrieved from <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/achieving-permanence.pdf>

⁶⁹ The CFSR onsite case review instrument was revised for CFSR Round 3, which began in 2015. For reference, the CFSR Round 2 instrument can be found on the Children’s Bureau website at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/cwmonitoring/tools_guide/proce_manual.htm. Detailed information concerning Item 19 and its relationship to various other measures in the CFSR onsite reviews can be found on page 35 in the following publication: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/cwmonitoring/results/genfindings04/genfindings04.pdf>.

⁷⁰ More information about the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 can be found on the Children’s Bureau website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pl-109-288>.

⁷¹ Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for federal fiscal year (FY) 2014 (October 1, 2013–September 30, 2014).

⁷² More information on the caseworker visits measures can be found in appendix C of this report. Information on previous caseworker visits data collection and reporting requirements can be found in Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-03, issued April 18, 2008: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pi0803.pdf>.

⁷³ More information about the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 can be found on the Children’s Bureau website under Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-11-06: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/im1106>.

⁷⁴ More detailed guidance on revised requirements for reporting the caseworker visits measures using the new methodology for reporting caseworker visits data is outlined in Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01, issued January 6, 2012: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pi1201.pdf>.

⁷⁵ For the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, children are considered reunified if the discharge reason provided to AFCARS is either (1) reunified with parent or primary caretaker or (2) living with other relatives.

if they also are not permanent (e.g., if the child reenters foster care within 12 months of being reunified). Since a state's reunification speed is understood best when it is also known how many of those children reentered foster care within a short period of time, a measure of reentry is also included.

Table IV-2 presents summary data regarding state performance in 2014 on timeliness of reunification without increasing reentries.

Table IV-2. Range of State Performance, 2014 Outcome 4: Achieving Timely Reunifications				
Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range (Percent)
Measure 4.1: Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care? (N=48 states)	55.8%	69.2%	74.8%	36.9–86.5%
Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (N=48 states)**	5.4%	7.5%	10.1%	2.4–16.2%

* Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

**For this measure, a lower value indicates better performance.

The 2014 data shown in table IV-2 indicate that, in many states, a majority of children discharged to reunification were reunified in a timely manner. For the purposes of the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, a reunification is considered to be timely if it occurs in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care. Additionally, table IV-2 shows that 7.5 percent of children entering foster care in 2014 reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. There was a wide range of performance across states in the proportion of children reentering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode, from 2.4 to 16.2 percent.

CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO ACHIEVING TIMELY REUNIFICATIONS

Table IV-3 shows the change in the national median over time for state performance on achieving timely reunifications for children in foster care. This table also shows the number of states with an improvement or decline in performance, as determined by a percent change calculation.

Table IV-3. Median State Performance and Change Over Time, 2010–2014* Outcome 4: Achieving Timely Reunifications							
Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year***					States That Improved in Performance	States That Declined in Performance
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010–2014	2010–2014
Measure 4.1: Percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care (N=45 states)	68.3%	68.3%	65.5%	65.7%	66.1%	9 states (20%)	14 states (31%)
Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (N=45 states)****	8.1%	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%	7.0%	25 states (56%)	13 states (29%)

* In accordance with standard procedure in this report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was "no change" in performance.

** The definitions for the measures in all cross-year comparison tables in this report have been shortened due to the complexity of the tables. Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table IV-2 or appendix B. Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

*** The 2014 data included on this table may be different from the data included in table IV-2 due to differences in the number of states included for each analysis.

**** For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

As illustrated in table IV-3, there was a slight overall decline in state performance on the percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care from 2010 to 2014 (3.2 percent decrease from 2010 to 2014). While this change is slight, 31.1 percent of states declined in performance as compared to just 20.0 percent of states that improved on performance in the same time period. There has been an improvement in state performance on the percentage of children reentering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode from 2010 to 2014, with a 13.6 percent decline in the national median from 2010 to 2014 (note that for this measure, a lower value indicates better performance). Over half of states (56 percent) improved in performance from 2010 to 2014 in the percent of children reentering foster care within 12 months of a prior episode.

TIMELINESS OF ADOPTIONS

The majority of children exiting foster care are reunified with their families, not adopted (see table III-4). However, when a decision is made that adoption is in the best interest of the child, adoption should proceed rapidly so that the child is able to be placed quickly in a secure, caring, and safe environment.

As referenced in the beginning of this chapter, timeliness of achieving permanency for children in foster care is critical to their well-being. ASFA amended Section 475(5)(E) of the Act to require that a state file a petition to terminate the parents' parental rights and concurrently pursue adoption as a permanency goal for any child who has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, unless the agency documents a compelling reason why such action would not be in the best interests of the child. In accordance with Section 475(5)(F), a child is considered to have "entered foster care" (for purposes of starting the clock for the 15 of 22 months) on the earlier of:

1. The first judicial finding that the child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect, or
2. The date that is 60 days (2 months) after the date on which the child is removed from the home

For the purposes of calculating this report's related outcome measures, a 17-month timeframe was used because the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) does not collect information pertaining to the date of the first judicial finding. HHS uses the date of the child's removal and adds to this date the 60 days and 15 months specified in the legislation to give this outcome measure its 17-month timeframe.

Nationally, approximately 106,000 children were waiting for adoption in 2014, and 50,000 children exited foster care to adoption in 2014.⁷⁶ Outcome measure 5.1 addresses the timeliness of adoptions. Table IV-4 presents summary data showing the range of state performance in 2014 on this measure.

Table IV-4. Range of State Performance, 2014
Outcome 5: Achieving Timely Adoptions

Outcome Measures	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range (Percent)
Measure 5.1a: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage were discharged in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=48 states)*	2.0%	4.1%	6.1%	0.3–28.3%
Measure 5.1b: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage were discharged in at least 12 but less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=48 states)*	12.9%	30.3%	36.2%	6.4–55.6%

* Measure 5.1 was among the original outcome measures established in 1998. It is a calculation of discharges to adoption for a range of time periods. Measure 5.1a denotes a 12-month period for the measure.

Measure 5.1 focuses on the length of time in foster care for children who are discharged to adoption. Performance on these measures in 2014 suggests that achieving timely adoptions is a challenge for all but a few states. As shown in table IV-4, in 2014, it was unusual in most states for adoptions to occur in less than 12 months from the child's entry into foster care. The national median was only 4.1 percent. In three states, however, the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 12 months was more than 10.0 percent. These states were Utah (28.3 percent), Florida (15.3 percent), and Wisconsin (10.1 percent).

CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO TIMELINESS OF ADOPTIONS

The median performance across states for the years 2010 to 2014 pertaining to achieving timely adoptions for children in foster care is presented in table IV-5.⁷⁷ Table IV-5 also presents a breakdown of the number of states showing an improvement or decline in performance between 2010 and 2014. Change in median state performance over time was computed by using a percent change calculation.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ There is no federal definition for a child "waiting for adoption." The definition used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report includes children and youth through age 17 who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A state's own definition may differ from that used here. Note that these adoption numbers are frequently updated. Please see the Children's Bureau website for the most updated data: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research>.

⁷⁷ The 2014 results displayed in this table may vary slightly from data included in table IV-4 because table IV-5 includes only states that provided data for the measures in all of the relevant years (2010 through 2014).

⁷⁸ Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.0 percent in 2010 and 4.9 percent in 2014, so the formula is $[(4.9 - 5.0) / 5.0] \times 100 = 2.0$ percent decrease.

Table IV-5. Median State Performance and Change Over Time, 2010–2014*
Outcome 5: Achieving Timely Adoptions

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year					States That Improved in Performance	States That Declined in Performance
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010–2014	2010–2014
Measure 5.1a: Percentage of children discharged to adoption in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care (N=45 states)***	4.1%	3.7%	4.5%	3.9%	4.1%	16 states (36%)	24 states (62%)
Measure 5.1b: Percentage of children discharged to adoption at least 12 but less than 24 months from the date of entry into foster care (N=45 states)***	28.2%	28.1%	29.2%	31.7%	30.2%	27 states (60%)	11 states (24%)

* In accordance with standard procedure in this report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

** The definitions for the measures in all cross-year comparison tables in this report have been shortened due to the complexity of the tables. Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table IV-4 or appendix B. Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

*** Measure 5.1 was among the original outcome measures established in 1998. It is a calculation of discharges to adoption for a range of time periods. Other variations of measure 5.1 representing other time periods are not shown in this table. However, state performance on each of the time periods is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. See appendix B for more information on how the measure is defined.

For the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 12 months (measure 5.1a), there was little change in the national median from 2010 to 2014. More striking is the percentage of states that declined in performance (62 percent) as compared to the percentage that showed improved performance (36 percent). For the percentage of adoptions occurring at least 12 but less than 24 months from a child’s entry into care (measure 5.1b), there was a slight increase in the national median from 2010 to 2014, with a 7.2 percent change from 2010 to 2014. In contrast to adoptions occurring in less than 12 months from a child’s entry into care, 60 percent of states demonstrated improved performance in the percent of adoptions occurring at least 12 but less than 24 months from entry into care.

Other time periods related to timeliness of adoption (measure 5.1) are displayed on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

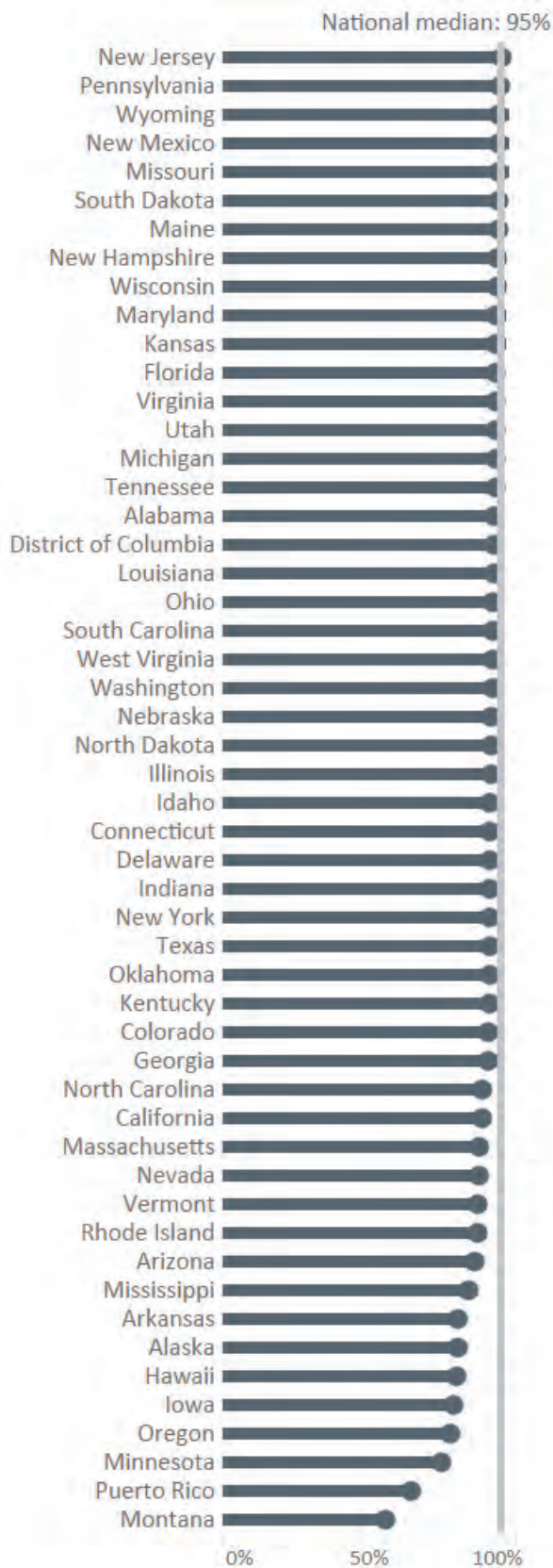
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING ACHIEVING REUNIFICATIONS AND ADOPTIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER

Achieving permanency for children in foster care in a timely manner was challenging for a number of states in 2014. In 2014, the national median percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry to care was 69.2 percent. However, between 2010 and 2014, nearly one-third of states (31 percent) declined in performance on this outcome.

The data for 2014 also indicate that achieving adoptions in a timely manner remains a challenge for many states. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of states declined in performance in the percentage of children discharged to adoption in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care.

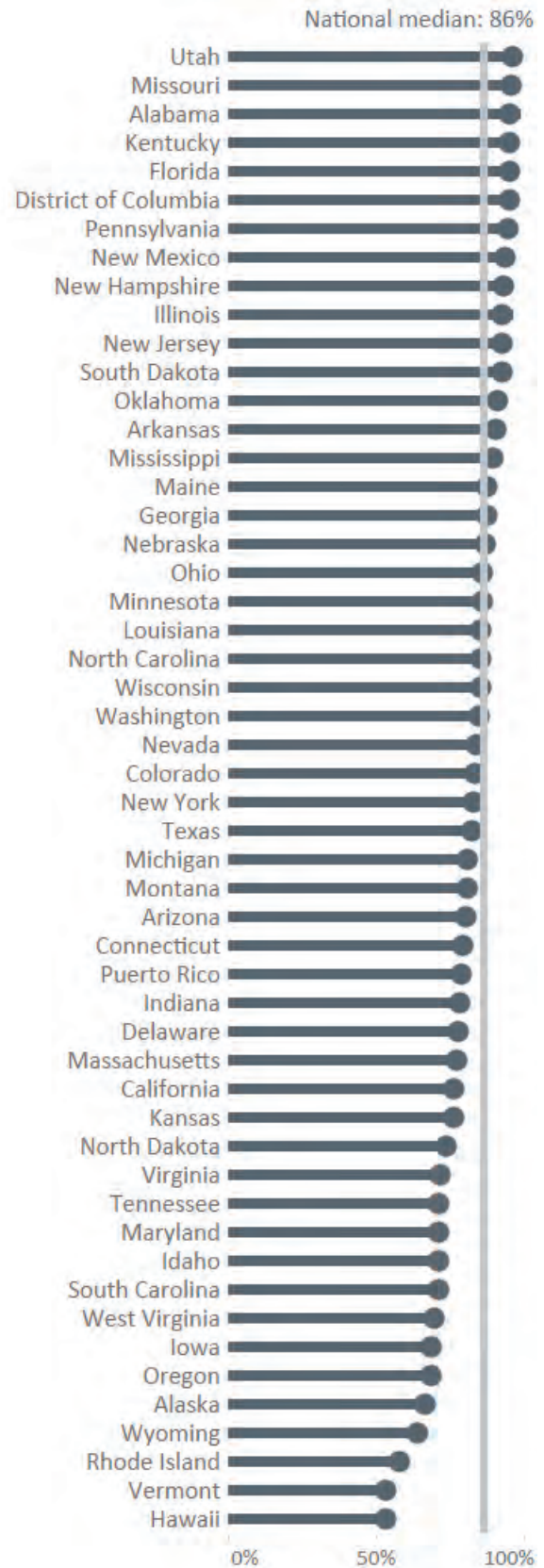
The end of this chapter displays outcome-based visuals related to achieving reunifications and adoptions in a timely manner, including caseworker visits data and state performance on Outcomes 4 and 5. More information on achieving reunifications and adoptions in a timely manner, including data on reentries to care, breakdowns by different lengths of stay, and state data including states excluded from analyses and counts due to incomplete or inadequate data, is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Figure IV-1. Percent of Children Receiving Monthly Caseworker Visits, 2014 (N=52 States)



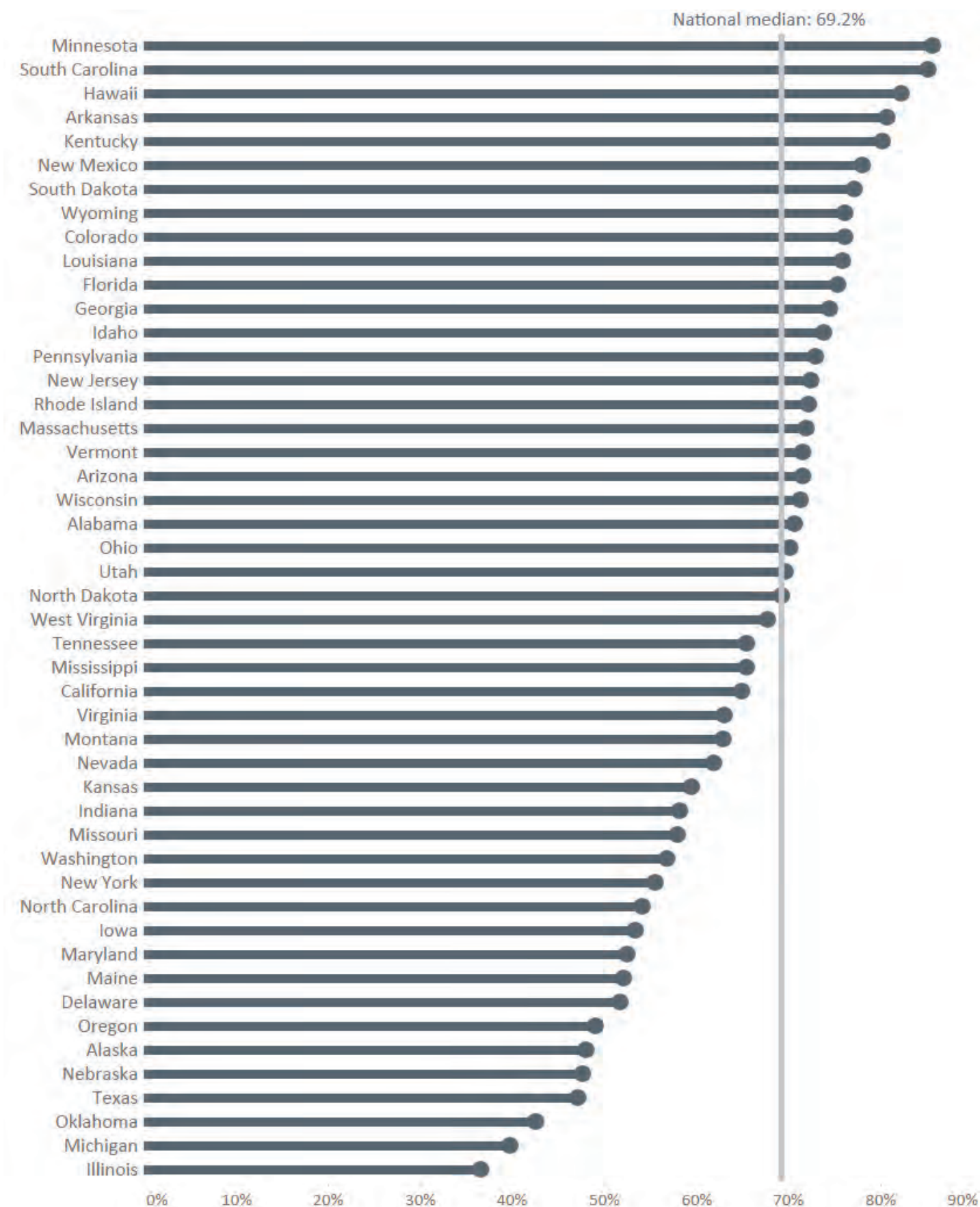
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure IV-2. Percent of Monthly Caseworker Visits Occurring in the Home of the Child, 2014 (N=51 States)



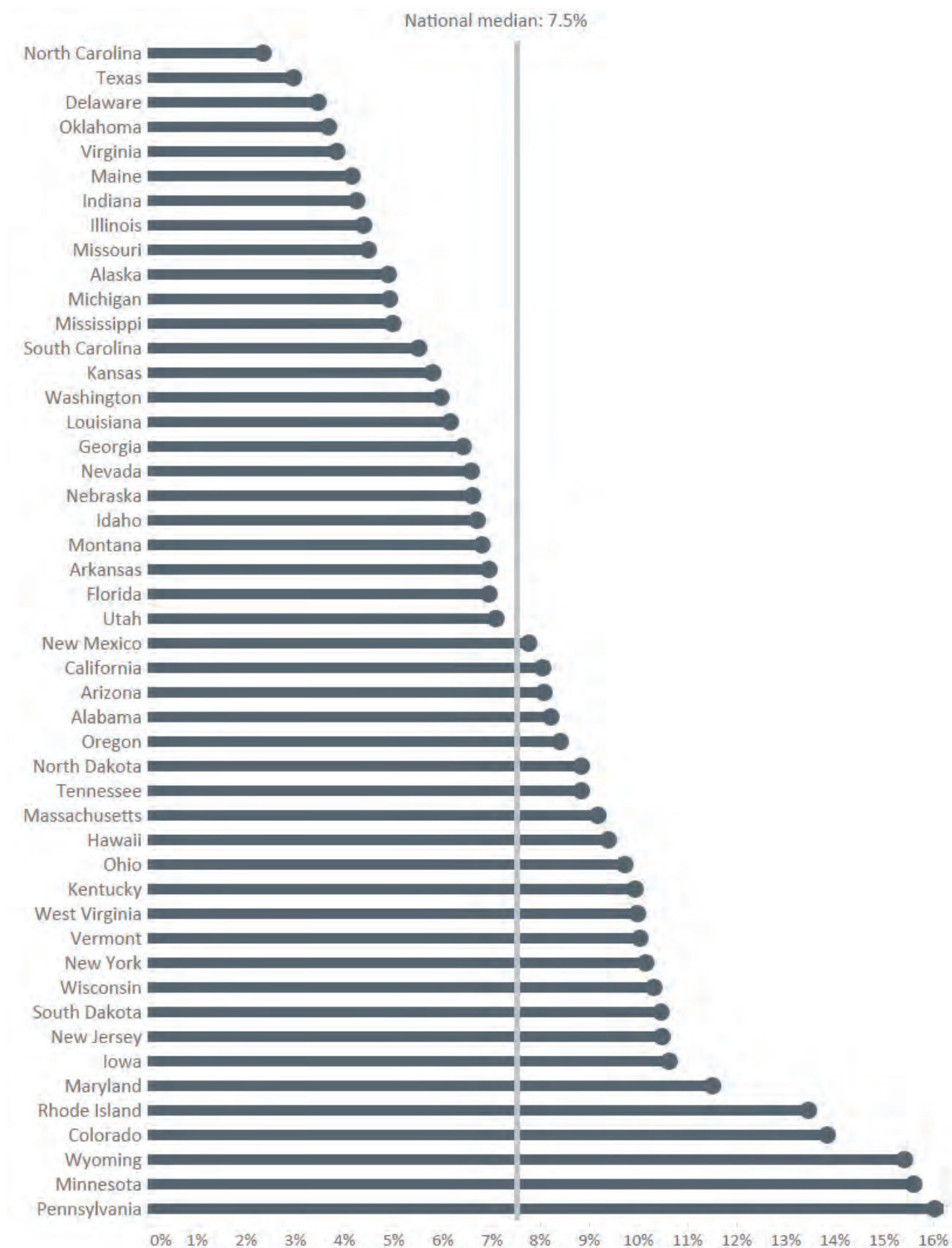
*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure IV-3. Outcome 4.1: Percent of Children Reunified Who Were in Care Less Than 12 Months, 2014, (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure IV-4. Outcome 4.2: Percent of Children Entering Care in the Given Year Within 12 Months of a Prior Foster Care Episode, 2014, (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Table IV-6. Outcome 4.1: Percent of Children Reunified Who Were in Care Less Than 12 Months, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	48.6%	43.0%	48.3%	48.7%	48.5%	-0.2%
Arizona	76.2%	76.1%	76.3%	73.0%	72.3%	-5.1%
Arkansas	85.5%	81.6%	82.7%	81.8%	81.5%	-4.7%
California	68.1%	66.2%	65.1%	65.7%	65.6%	-3.8%
Colorado	78.0%	76.5%	77.4%	75.9%	77.0%	-1.4%
Delaware	67.0%	72.6%	65.5%	63.5%	52.3%	-22.0%
Florida	73.5%	75.3%	73.9%	71.4%	76.1%	3.6%
Georgia	69.7%	74.5%	73.2%	70.6%	75.3%	8.0%
Hawaii	82.1%	84.1%	80.5%	83.7%	83.1%	1.1%
Idaho	82.0%	80.7%	72.4%	73.9%	74.6%	-9.0%
Illinois	58.7%	47.1%	38.2%	36.9%	36.9%	-37.1%
Indiana	68.3%	65.3%	62.1%	58.0%	58.7%	-14.0%
Iowa	63.3%	59.1%	54.7%	55.9%	53.9%	-14.9%
Kansas	57.6%	53.0%	56.8%	64.0%	60.1%	4.4%
Kentucky	75.9%	74.9%	79.0%	79.6%	81.0%	6.8%
Louisiana	69.1%	71.4%	73.5%	73.8%	76.7%	10.9%
Maine	47.1%	48.0%	50.4%	61.2%	52.6%	11.7%
Maryland	54.1%	54.4%	54.5%	52.5%	53.0%	-2.1%
Massachusetts	67.8%	70.2%	68.0%	68.7%	72.7%	7.3%
Michigan	35.8%	39.3%	38.4%	44.3%	40.1%	12.0%
Minnesota	88.3%	88.2%	89.3%	88.3%	86.5%	-2.1%
Mississippi	66.4%	63.4%	59.0%	60.5%	66.1%	-0.5%
Missouri	62.8%	62.7%	63.6%	60.0%	58.6%	-6.7%
Montana	61.0%	62.2%	63.1%	65.4%	63.6%	4.3%
Nebraska	52.0%	52.8%	48.7%	44.1%	48.2%	-7.4%
Nevada	60.7%	61.0%	55.3%	63.7%	62.5%	3.1%
New Jersey	71.8%	70.3%	76.6%	75.1%	73.3%	2.1%
New Mexico	76.0%	79.5%	76.1%	75.8%	78.9%	3.9%
New York	57.7%	56.5%	56.2%	55.9%	56.1%	-2.7%
North Carolina	54.4%	55.8%	54.9%	56.8%	54.7%	0.6%
North Dakota	70.5%	67.8%	63.6%	63.8%	70.0%	-0.8%
Ohio	73.2%	74.3%	73.0%	72.2%	70.9%	-3.2%
Oklahoma	47.1%	52.0%	54.2%	45.4%	43.0%	-8.7%
Oregon	57.7%	59.6%	54.7%	51.5%	49.5%	-14.2%
Rhode Island	71.2%	68.4%	72.4%	77.6%	72.9%	2.4%
South Carolina	76.9%	78.0%	77.0%	82.6%	86.0%	11.9%
South Dakota	81.4%	82.7%	75.6%	75.9%	77.9%	-4.3%
Tennessee	76.7%	74.4%	72.3%	70.5%	66.1%	-13.8%
Texas	53.0%	49.6%	49.1%	49.1%	47.6%	-10.2%
Utah	74.2%	69.4%	74.6%	69.2%	70.4%	-5.1%
Vermont	55.9%	64.2%	67.1%	68.9%	72.4%	29.4%
Virginia	58.1%	59.9%	60.6%	60.4%	63.7%	9.6%
Washington	71.2%	68.3%	57.0%	56.5%	57.5%	-19.4%
Wisconsin	70.5%	74.4%	71.6%	71.6%	72.0%	2.2%
Wyoming	76.3%	79.1%	76.6%	74.2%	77.0%	0.9%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table IV-7. Outcome 4.2: Percent of Children Entering Care in the Given Year Within 12 Months of a Prior Foster Care Episode, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

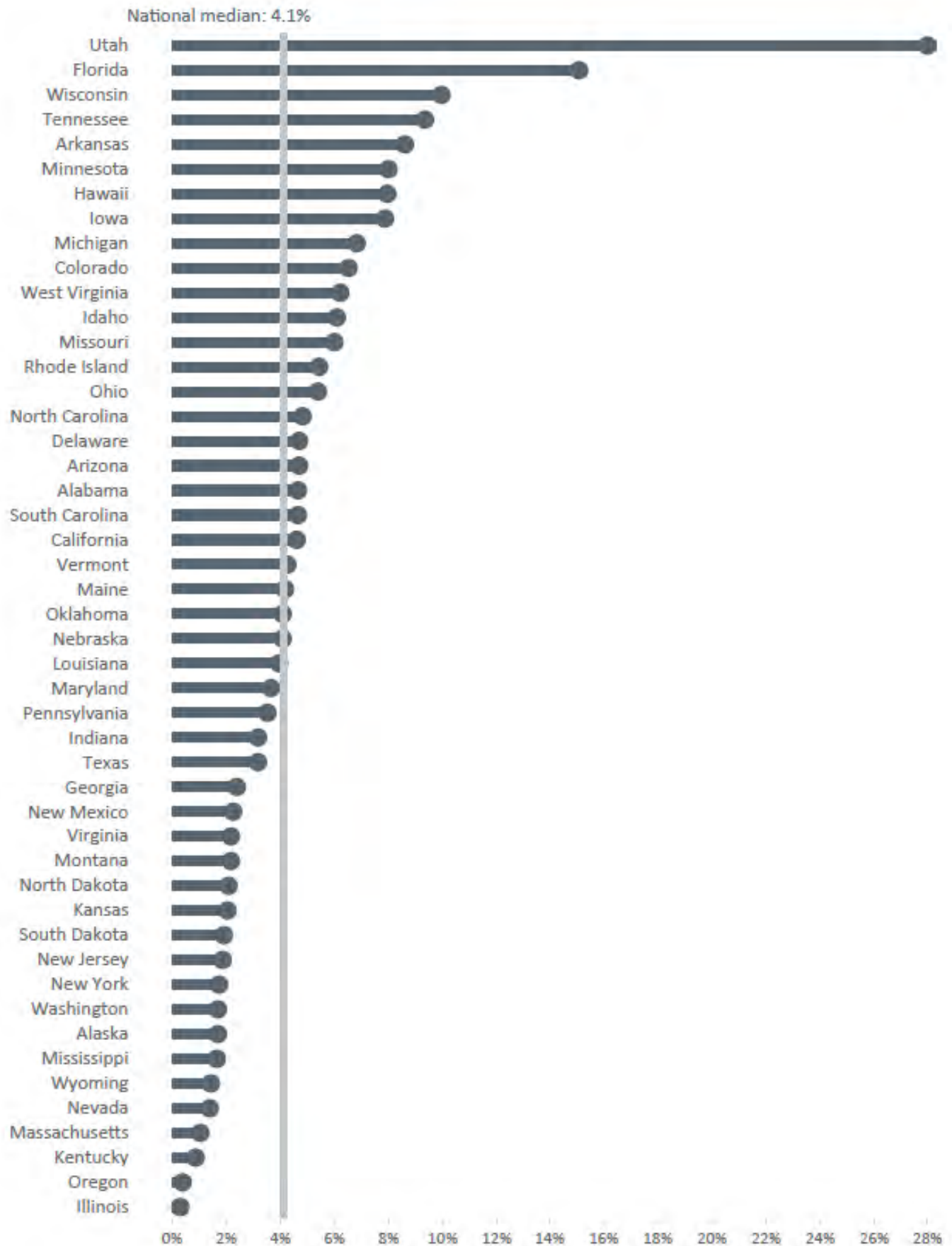
State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	4.5%	5.3%	3.9%	4.8%	5.0%	9.9%
Arizona	10.0%	8.7%	7.9%	8.8%	8.2%	-18.9%
Arkansas	8.2%	9.5%	7.7%	7.8%	7.0%	-14.5%
California	9.2%	8.7%	9.2%	8.4%	8.1%	-11.6%
Colorado	15.7%	16.1%	15.7%	15.5%	14.0%	-10.8%
Delaware	4.8%	1.9%	3.9%	4.0%	3.5%	-27.5%
Florida	8.3%	7.3%	7.8%	8.8%	7.0%	-14.9%
Georgia	6.7%	5.9%	6.9%	6.8%	6.5%	-2.9%
Hawaii	8.5%	7.3%	8.9%	10.7%	9.5%	11.0%
Idaho	7.8%	7.5%	6.4%	4.8%	6.8%	-12.7%
Illinois	5.2%	5.4%	4.4%	4.7%	4.5%	-14.1%
Indiana	7.7%	6.8%	6.1%	4.6%	4.3%	-43.9%
Iowa	11.5%	11.9%	10.5%	8.9%	10.7%	-6.9%
Kansas	5.6%	4.2%	4.7%	4.9%	5.9%	5.4%
Kentucky	8.6%	9.5%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	16.4%
Louisiana	6.2%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	6.2%	0.7%
Maine	4.9%	6.6%	4.7%	2.5%	4.2%	-14.7%
Maryland	8.0%	10.0%	11.0%	11.2%	11.6%	45.0%
Massachusetts	12.3%	12.5%	12.2%	11.7%	9.3%	-24.4%
Michigan	3.0%	3.6%	2.7%	2.7%	5.0%	66.5%
Minnesota	19.2%	18.9%	19.7%	16.2%	15.8%	-18.0%
Mississippi	4.7%	4.5%	5.4%	5.0%	5.0%	6.5%
Missouri	6.6%	6.8%	6.1%	5.2%	4.5%	-31.3%
Montana	9.3%	8.0%	8.2%	5.7%	6.9%	-26.1%
Nebraska	9.4%	8.7%	6.4%	6.8%	6.7%	-28.7%
Nevada	5.2%	4.8%	4.9%	5.6%	6.7%	27.2%
New Jersey	8.4%	8.4%	8.3%	10.1%	10.6%	26.5%
New Mexico	7.3%	6.4%	6.9%	7.4%	7.8%	7.3%
New York	11.3%	12.2%	12.0%	10.0%	10.2%	-9.5%
North Carolina	1.7%	2.3%	2.9%	2.7%	2.4%	39.6%
North Dakota	8.9%	11.9%	8.3%	9.3%	8.9%	0.0%
Ohio	10.7%	9.7%	11.0%	11.1%	9.8%	-8.2%
Oklahoma	5.6%	5.1%	4.4%	4.3%	3.7%	-33.1%
Oregon	8.1%	8.2%	8.0%	9.2%	8.5%	4.3%
Rhode Island	15.2%	16.7%	18.8%	15.2%	13.6%	-10.6%
South Carolina	7.6%	7.2%	6.8%	5.9%	5.6%	-26.4%
South Dakota	11.5%	11.7%	13.7%	9.4%	10.6%	-8.4%
Tennessee	9.3%	7.8%	8.1%	8.3%	8.9%	-3.9%
Texas	2.9%	2.8%	3.3%	3.5%	3.0%	4.6%
Utah	5.7%	6.7%	5.9%	7.1%	7.2%	26.8%
Vermont	10.7%	10.9%	11.9%	9.6%	10.1%	-5.3%
Virginia	4.0%	5.0%	4.5%	4.8%	3.9%	-1.5%
Washington	7.8%	5.9%	5.9%	6.8%	6.0%	-22.2%
Wisconsin	15.4%	13.0%	13.9%	11.0%	10.4%	-32.4%
Wyoming	13.4%	12.1%	11.3%	13.8%	15.6%	16.1%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data is available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

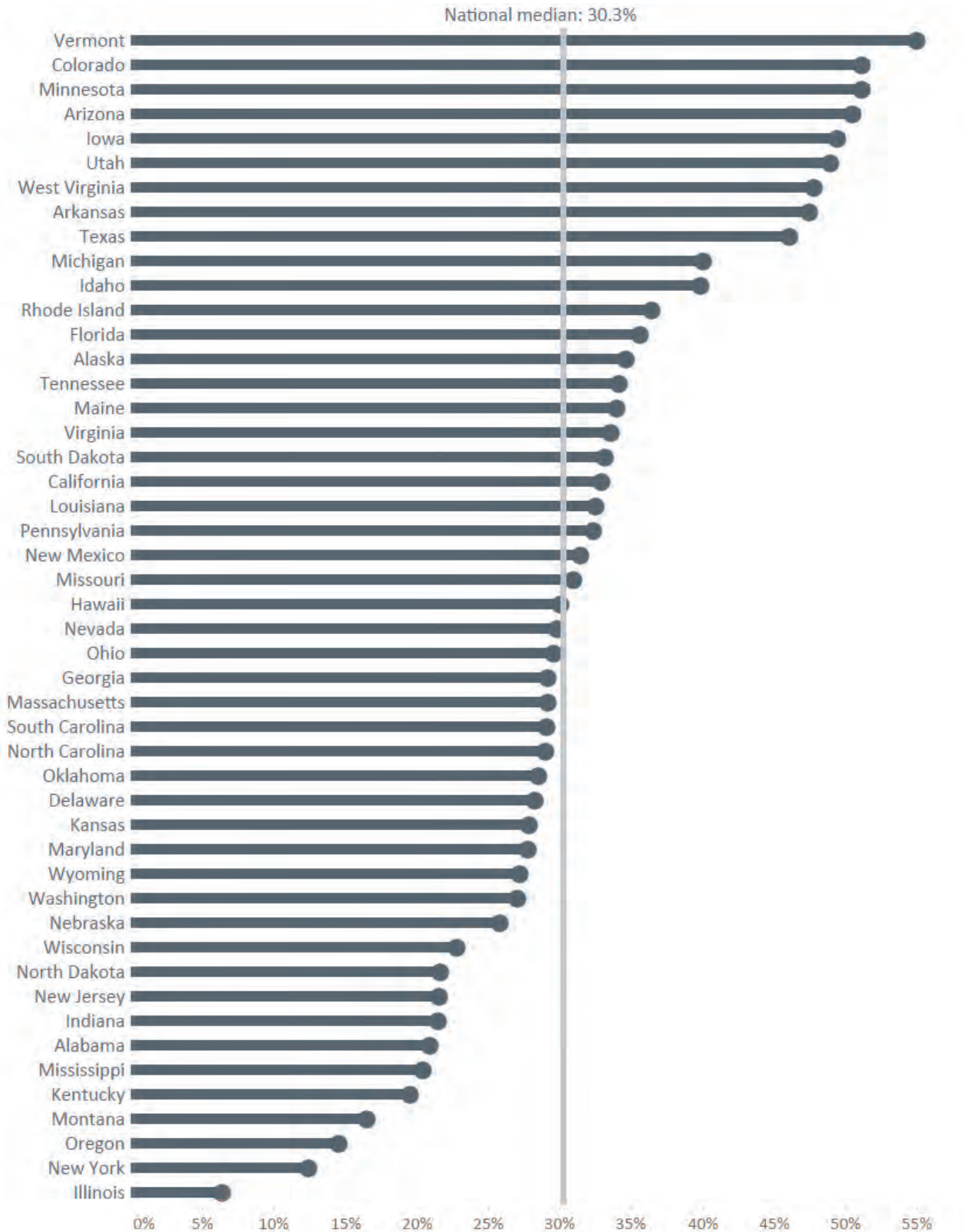
Note: For this measure, a lower value indicates better performance

Figure IV-5. Outcome 5.1a: Percent of Children Adopted Who Were in Care Less Than 12 Months, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure IV-6. Outcome 5.1b: Percent of Children Adopted Who Were in Care At Least 12 but Less Than 24 Months, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Table IV-8. Outcome 5.1a: Percent of Children Adopted Who Were in Care Less Than 12 Months, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	2.9%	3.6%	0.7%	1.9%	1.7%	-41.2%
Arizona	3.9%	4.7%	5.9%	5.9%	4.7%	20.8%
Arkansas	9.8%	8.1%	6.8%	7.6%	8.7%	-11.4%
California	5.0%	4.9%	5.0%	5.5%	4.6%	-8.0%
Colorado	9.8%	10.1%	10.4%	8.4%	6.6%	-32.8%
Delaware	6.0%	3.2%	4.4%	2.7%	4.8%	-20.2%
Florida	11.1%	12.2%	15.6%	14.6%	15.3%	37.4%
Georgia	3.0%	4.9%	5.2%	5.4%	2.4%	-20.4%
Hawaii	5.8%	9.0%	4.5%	8.3%	8.0%	37.9%
Idaho	4.2%	3.9%	6.4%	3.0%	6.2%	45.5%
Illinois	1.2%	0.2%	0.9%	1.1%	0.3%	-73.4%
Indiana	2.4%	3.6%	3.0%	1.8%	3.2%	32.7%
Iowa	10.1%	8.3%	6.9%	6.4%	7.9%	-21.4%
Kansas	3.6%	1.9%	3.0%	1.9%	2.1%	-43.4%
Kentucky	1.7%	0.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.9%	-48.8%
Louisiana	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.8%	4.0%	81.4%
Maine	4.1%	1.4%	1.1%	0.6%	4.2%	3.3%
Maryland	1.9%	2.4%	2.4%	2.8%	3.7%	92.0%
Massachusetts	1.3%	0.7%	1.1%	1.6%	1.0%	-19.2%
Michigan	4.0%	3.4%	5.8%	7.1%	6.9%	73.8%
Minnesota	5.2%	8.0%	8.4%	8.3%	8.1%	56.2%
Mississippi	4.5%	3.6%	2.2%	2.1%	1.7%	-62.6%
Missouri	7.6%	11.1%	7.3%	6.9%	6.1%	-20.3%
Montana	4.8%	1.3%	2.2%	3.0%	2.2%	-54.7%
Nebraska	5.5%	7.2%	4.6%	4.4%	4.1%	-25.1%
Nevada	2.0%	1.2%	2.0%	2.0%	1.4%	-32.0%
New Jersey	3.2%	2.9%	3.6%	2.1%	1.9%	-41.2%
New Mexico	2.9%	3.1%	2.6%	1.9%	2.3%	-21.1%
New York	1.3%	2.0%	1.1%	1.9%	1.8%	38.4%
North Carolina	6.1%	6.6%	7.9%	5.3%	4.9%	-20.4%
North Dakota	22.7%	5.1%	2.8%	5.2%	2.1%	-90.8%
Ohio	4.6%	5.1%	5.6%	6.6%	5.4%	18.5%
Oklahoma	3.5%	3.7%	5.2%	5.4%	4.1%	17.2%
Oregon	1.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	-64.7%
Rhode Island	6.6%	7.0%	9.2%	5.6%	5.5%	-16.5%
South Carolina	2.4%	3.8%	4.9%	3.9%	4.7%	92.1%
South Dakota	2.3%	1.8%	3.2%	0.6%	1.9%	-16.5%
Tennessee	6.3%	6.7%	7.7%	7.8%	9.5%	51.0%
Texas	2.9%	3.5%	3.5%	3.2%	3.2%	9.2%
Utah	32.5%	38.5%	33.5%	34.4%	28.3%	-12.8%
Vermont	10.8%	12.0%	7.0%	8.0%	4.3%	-59.8%
Virginia	3.5%	2.7%	2.9%	2.5%	2.2%	-36.6%
Washington	2.3%	2.4%	2.7%	2.3%	1.7%	-25.6%
Wisconsin	8.5%	7.4%	7.4%	13.0%	10.1%	19.1%
Wyoming	4.1%	10.8%	9.1%	12.9%	1.4%	-64.3%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table IV-9. Outcome 5.1b: Percent of Children Adopted Who Were in Care at Least 12 but Less Than 24 Months, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	26.6%	20.9%	28.1%	26.5%	35.0%	31.7%
Arizona	43.7%	42.3%	48.1%	50.6%	51.0%	16.9%
Arkansas	36.3%	34.4%	39.7%	42.5%	48.0%	32.1%
California	27.2%	28.1%	32.1%	31.9%	33.3%	22.5%
Colorado	40.6%	46.7%	44.9%	43.0%	51.7%	27.5%
Delaware	29.9%	31.6%	27.5%	40.5%	28.6%	-4.3%
Florida	32.5%	40.0%	39.3%	41.6%	36.0%	10.6%
Georgia	25.6%	29.2%	34.3%	32.6%	29.5%	15.3%
Hawaii	28.2%	29.9%	20.3%	30.6%	30.4%	7.8%
Idaho	28.0%	37.3%	49.8%	51.0%	40.3%	43.8%
Illinois	9.6%	7.7%	8.5%	8.9%	6.4%	-33.3%
Indiana	28.2%	26.6%	26.1%	24.3%	21.7%	-22.9%
Iowa	49.3%	48.9%	54.4%	52.2%	50.0%	1.3%
Kansas	27.3%	24.1%	34.1%	31.7%	28.2%	3.2%
Kentucky	19.9%	20.5%	19.9%	19.9%	19.8%	-0.7%
Louisiana	21.9%	24.5%	27.1%	29.0%	32.9%	50.2%
Maine	30.0%	35.0%	31.5%	35.6%	34.4%	14.6%
Maryland	11.5%	11.6%	21.4%	22.1%	28.0%	143.7%
Massachusetts	25.7%	21.2%	23.1%	36.0%	29.5%	14.6%
Michigan	29.9%	31.1%	32.6%	34.2%	40.4%	35.3%
Minnesota	38.3%	39.8%	43.6%	42.9%	51.7%	35.1%
Mississippi	30.0%	23.1%	23.4%	18.8%	20.7%	-31.0%
Missouri	29.6%	34.8%	33.2%	33.7%	31.3%	5.7%
Montana	18.8%	25.2%	20.8%	22.4%	16.7%	-11.4%
Nebraska	29.0%	29.0%	27.5%	27.2%	26.1%	-10.0%
Nevada	12.6%	16.8%	23.3%	25.9%	30.2%	139.9%
New Jersey	21.5%	22.9%	21.1%	23.0%	21.8%	1.5%
New Mexico	35.0%	29.0%	31.3%	31.3%	31.8%	-9.1%
New York	9.1%	11.0%	9.1%	9%	12.6%	38.4%
North Carolina	30.1%	27.1%	31.4%	33.1%	29.3%	-2.5%
North Dakota	23.5%	27.6%	27.8%	38.5%	21.9%	-7.0%
Ohio	28.5%	25.8%	26.9%	28.2%	29.9%	5.0%
Oklahoma	24.7%	24.1%	32.9%	34.6%	28.8%	16.6%
Oregon	20.8%	17.3%	12.3%	12.0%	14.7%	-29.1%
Rhode Island	34.4%	31.8%	37.0%	28.6%	36.8%	6.9%
South Carolina	19.5%	21.3%	23.7%	26.8%	29.4%	51.0%
South Dakota	30.3%	32.9%	28.6%	25.4%	33.5%	10.7%
Tennessee	38.2%	40.6%	43.0%	38.3%	34.5%	-9.5%
Texas	35.4%	42.6%	45.9%	45.6%	46.6%	31.5%
Utah	53.6%	46.8%	50.9%	48.7%	49.4%	-7.8%
Vermont	42.4%	31.6%	54.4%	48.6%	55.6%	31.0%
Virginia	22.3%	24.5%	29.2%	30.4%	34.0%	52.4%
Washington	21.9%	26.8%	35.0%	28.3%	27.3%	24.9%
Wisconsin	18.2%	23.0%	22.4%	21.6%	23.1%	26.6%
Wyoming	29.7%	32.4%	22.1%	34.1%	27.5%	-7.4%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data is available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

V: Achieving Stable and Appropriate Placement Settings for Children in Foster Care

While a child is in foster care, it is the state child welfare agency's responsibility to ensure that the child is in a stable placement setting.⁷⁹ The appropriateness of a placement setting also is important to the well-being of children in foster care. Placement setting stability is addressed in Outcome 6: *Increase placement stability for children in foster care*, and placement setting appropriateness is addressed in Outcome 7: *Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions*.

In this report, placement setting stability is defined as a child having had two or fewer placement settings in a single foster care episode.⁸⁰ This was the approach used in prior Child Welfare Outcomes Reports.

Outcome 7 is evaluated by examining the degree to which children age 12 or younger are placed in family foster homes rather than group homes or institutions. By Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Report System (AFCARS) definitions, group homes generally have between 7 and 12 children, and institutions are typically larger and may include such facilities as residential treatment facilities or child care institutions. There are some instances in which a group home or institution is determined to be the most appropriate placement to meet the needs of a child. For example, young children may need a particular type of care to meet certain physical or mental health needs. However, the driving assumption behind this outcome measure is that, while group homes or institutions may be appropriate for some children and youth in foster care, younger children are likely to have their needs better met in a family setting.⁸¹

There are some children in foster care for whom a foster family setting will not meet their highly specialized needs. However, a family setting commonly will be the most appropriate, especially for young children.

Table V-1 presents the findings of state performance on measures of placement stability (measure 6.1) and placements of young children in group homes or institutions (measure 7.1).⁸² For outcome measure 6.1, data are presented that measure placement stability for multiple timeframes for length of stay in foster care (i.e., less than 12 months, 12 months to less than 24 months, and 24 months or more).

Table V-1. Range of State Performance, 2014
Outcomes 6 and 7: Achieving Stable and Appropriate Placement Settings

Outcome Measures	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range (Percent)
Measure 6.1a: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for less than 12 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=48 states)	79.9%	85.6%	87.8%	73.7–91.4%
Measure 6.1b: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=48 states)	58.7%	66.1%	68.8%	44.0–76.9%
Measure 6.1c: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=48 states)	30.0%	35.7%	41.9%	15.7–53.1%
Measure 7.1: Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or institution? (N=48 states)*	2.4%	4.0%	5.4%	0.8–22.0%

* For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

As shown in table V-1, in most states, the majority of children in foster care for less than 12 months experienced no more than two placement settings in 2014 (measure 6.1a, median = 85.6 percent). It is encouraging that more than four out of five children remain in stable placements during the first year in foster care. While there may be times when a new placement setting will be in the best interest of the child, it is generally important for states to continue to do as much as they can to keep placement setting counts to a minimum.

⁷⁹ For the purposes of this report, “foster care” refers to a variety of out-of-home placement settings, including foster family homes, group homes, shelters, residential treatment facilities, and similar placements for children who are placed away from their parents or guardians in 24-hour substitute care and under the placement and care responsibility of a state child welfare agency for at least 24 hours (see 45 CFR 1355, Appendix A, Section II).

⁸⁰ A single foster care episode begins on the date when a child is removed from the home and ends when the child is discharged from foster care (is no longer under the care and placement responsibility of the state). The count of placement settings does not include temporary stays in hospitals, camps, respite care, or institutional placements.

⁸¹ The Children’s Bureau released a data brief in 2015 on the use of group homes and institutions (i.e., congregate care placements) in child welfare that underscores the importance of placing children age 12 and younger in settings that are most appropriate to meet their needs, including (and especially) family-like settings. The brief can be accessed on the Children’s Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/congregate-care-brief>.

⁸² In this report, the designation of “state” includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure. Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for federal fiscal year (FY) 2014 (October 1, 2013–September 30, 2014).

Although most states appear to be reasonably successful in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months, states tend to be far less successful in keeping the number of placement settings low for children in foster care for longer periods of time. As shown in table V-1, the median across states declines from 85.6 percent for children in foster care for less than 12 months to 66.1 percent for children in foster care for 12 to 24 months, and then declines even further to 35.7 percent for children in foster care for 24 months or longer.

Please note that direct comparisons between these measures are difficult to make. First, these measures count all placement settings up until discharge from care or the end of the period, not only those that occurred during the year of interest. In addition, the composition of children included in each measure varies. For example, the population of children in care less than 12 months includes infants and very young children (i.e. includes children age 0-2), whereas the measure for children in care 24 months or longer limits the population to age two and older. Age is an important factor to consider when assessing placement stability.

It is important to note that the relationship between time in care and placement setting stability is more nuanced than it may initially appear. Research suggests a link between placement stability and variables such as the age of the child, placement setting type, the presence of child behavioral problems, and the availability of programs and services for children and resource families.⁸³ Research also indicates that children who experience early placement stability experience fewer behavioral problems and better outcomes.⁸⁴ Therefore, time in care is likely also linked to other variables that have an impact on its relationship to placement stability.

The data in table V-1 also indicate that in about half of the states in 2014, 4.0 percent or less of children entering foster care under the age of 12 were placed in group homes or institutions. The low median on this measure indicates positive national performance overall. This is further supported by data indicating that there were only two states in which the percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions was above 10 percent.⁸⁵

CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF ACHIEVING STABLE AND APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Table V-2 provides the change in the national median over time on measures pertaining to achieving stable and appropriate placement settings for children in foster care. This table also shows the number of states with an improvement or decline in performance on these measures.⁸⁶

Table V-2. Median State Performance and Change Over Time, 2010–2014*
Outcomes 6 and 7: Achieving Stable and Appropriate Placement Settings

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year (Percent)					States That Improved in Performance	States That Declined in Performance
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010–2014	2010–2014
Measure 6.1a: Percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experience two or fewer placement settings (N=45 states)	85.3%	85.9%	85.2%	86.0%	85.4%	5 states (11%)	3 states (7%)
Measure 6.1b: Percentage of children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months who experience two or fewer placement settings (N=45 states)	61.4%	62.9%	64.2%	64.8%	66.0%	20 states (44%)	4 states (9%)
Measure 6.1c: Percentage of children in foster care for 24 months or longer who experience two or fewer placement settings (N=45 states)	32.0%	32.8%	35.2%	34.2%	35.3%	33 states (73%)	4 states (9%)
Measure 7.1: Percentage of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger who are placed in group homes or institutions (N=45 states)***	4.5%	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	3.9%	25 states (56%)	15 states (33%)

* In accordance with standard procedure in this report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

** The definitions for the measures in all cross-year comparison tables in this report have been shortened due to the complexity of the tables. Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table V-1 or appendix B. Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all of the relevant years.

*** For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

⁸³ Noonan, K., Rubin, D., Mekonnen, R., Zlotnik, S., & O'Reilly, A. (2009). Securing child safety, well-being, and permanency through placement stability in foster care. *Evidence to Action*, 1. Retrieved from <http://stoneleighfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20to%20Action%20No%201.pdf>

⁸⁴ Rubin, D. M., O'Reilly, A. L., Luan, X., & Localio, R. (2007). The impact of placement stability on behavioral well-being for children in foster care. *Pediatrics*, 119(2), 336–44.

⁸⁵ The two states were Arkansas and South Carolina.

⁸⁶ Percent change is calculated by subtracting “old” data from “new” data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.0 percent in 2010 and 4.9 percent in 2014, so the formula is $[(4.9 - 5.0) / 5.0] \times 100 = 2.0$ percent decrease.

As indicated by table V-2, there was very little change between 2010 and 2014 in the percentage of children in foster care for 12 months or less who experienced two or fewer placement settings (measure 6.1a). During this time, the median for this measure increased only minimally, and 82 percent of states did not exhibit significant performance changes in either the positive or negative direction.

Table V-2 shows significant improvements related to the increases in the percentages of children in foster care for 12 months or longer who experienced two or fewer placement settings (measures 6.1b and 6.1c). For children in care between 12 and 24 months, the percentage of children experiencing two or fewer placement settings (measure 6.1b) consistently increased from 61.4 percent in 2010 to 66.0 percent in 2014 (a 7.5 percent increase). For this measure, 44 percent of states improved in performance while only nine percent declined. There was an even greater improvement in performance on measure 6.1c, the percentage of children in care for 24 months or longer who experienced two or fewer placement settings. For this measure, the median increased from 32.0 percent in 2010 to 35.3 in 2014, a 10.3 percent increase. Furthermore, 73 percent of states demonstrated improvement on this measure, while only 9 percent declined in performance.

Previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports have shown significant improvements over time on measure 7.1, the percentage of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger who are placed in group homes or institutions. This trend continued between 2010 and 2014 when the median decreased from 4.5 to 3.9 percent (a -12.7 percent change). During the five-year span, 56 percent of states showed improved performance on this measure, and 33 percent declined in performance. Note that for this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING ACHIEVING STABLE AND APPROPRIATE PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

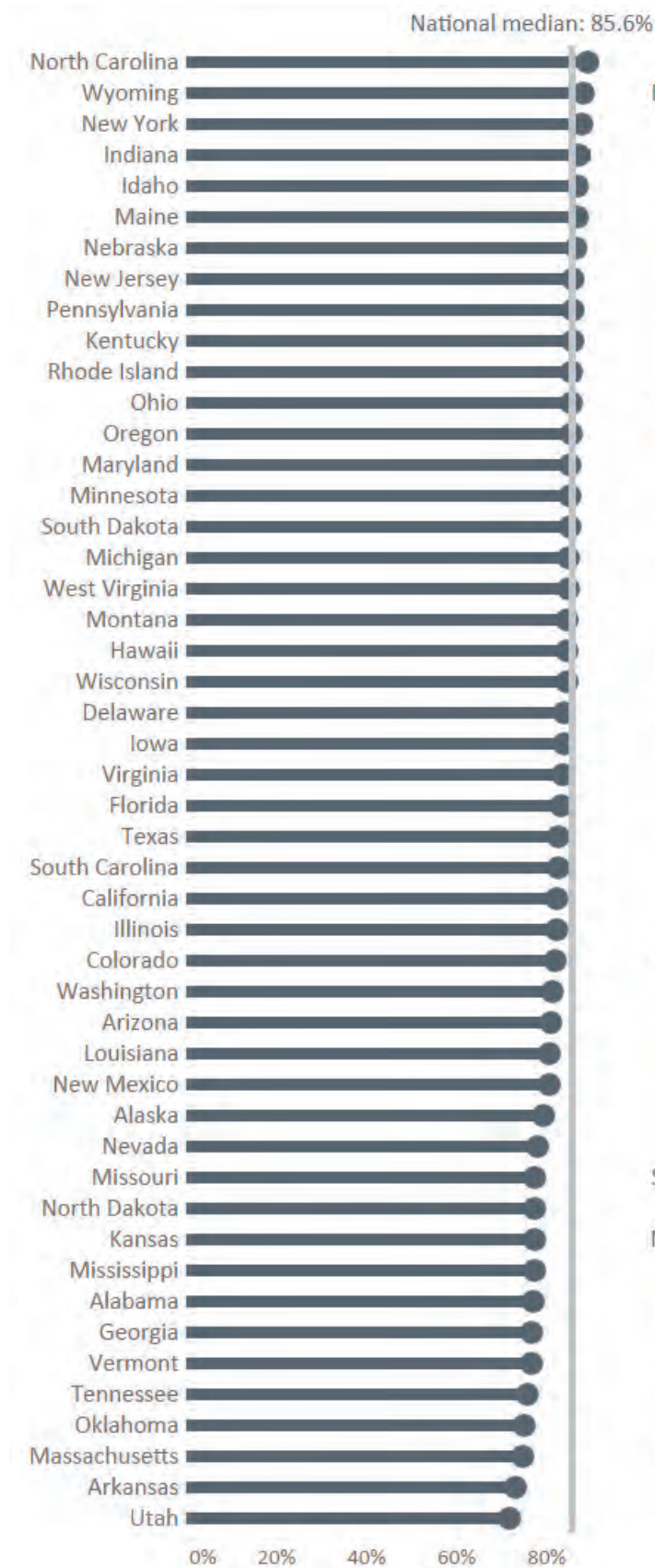
A consistent finding of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports is that, although states are fairly successful in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months, the percentage of children who have placement stability declines considerably the longer the children are in foster care. It is promising, however, that states have demonstrated improvement in achieving placement setting stability for children in care longer than 12 months.

Despite being less successful at achieving placement stability for children in foster care for more than 12 months, the number of states demonstrating improvement in this measure is promising.

It is also encouraging that the use of group homes and institutions for children age 12 and younger is continuing to decline and that over half of the states have shown meaningful improvement over the past five years on this measure.

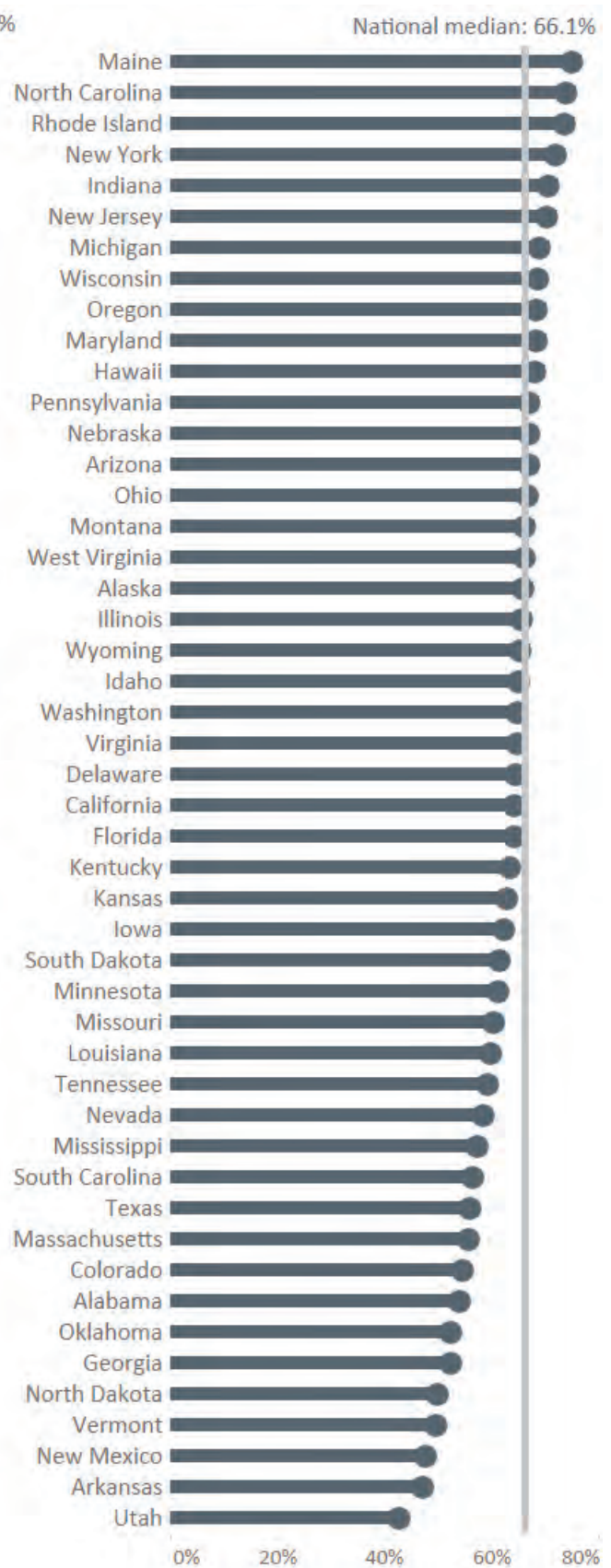
The end of this chapter displays outcome-based visuals related to achieving stable and appropriate placements for children in foster care, including state performance on Outcomes 6 and 7.1. Additional information on achieving stable and appropriate placements for children and state data, including states excluded from analyses and counts due to incomplete or inadequate data, is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Figure V-1. Percent of Children in Care Less Than 12 Months With 2 or Fewer Placements, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure V-2. Percent of Children in Care More Than 12 but Less Than 24 Months With 2 or Fewer Placements, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

Figure V-3. Percent of Children in Care 24 Months or Longer With 2 or Fewer Placements, 2014 (N=48 States)*

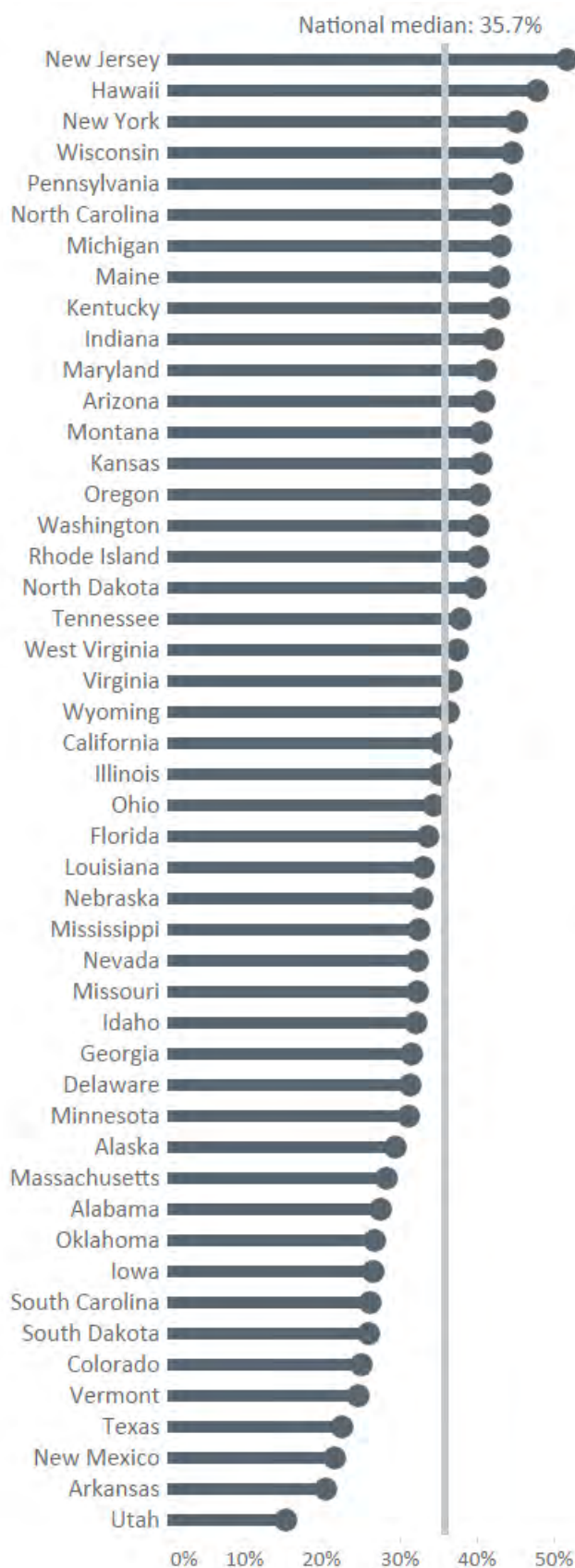
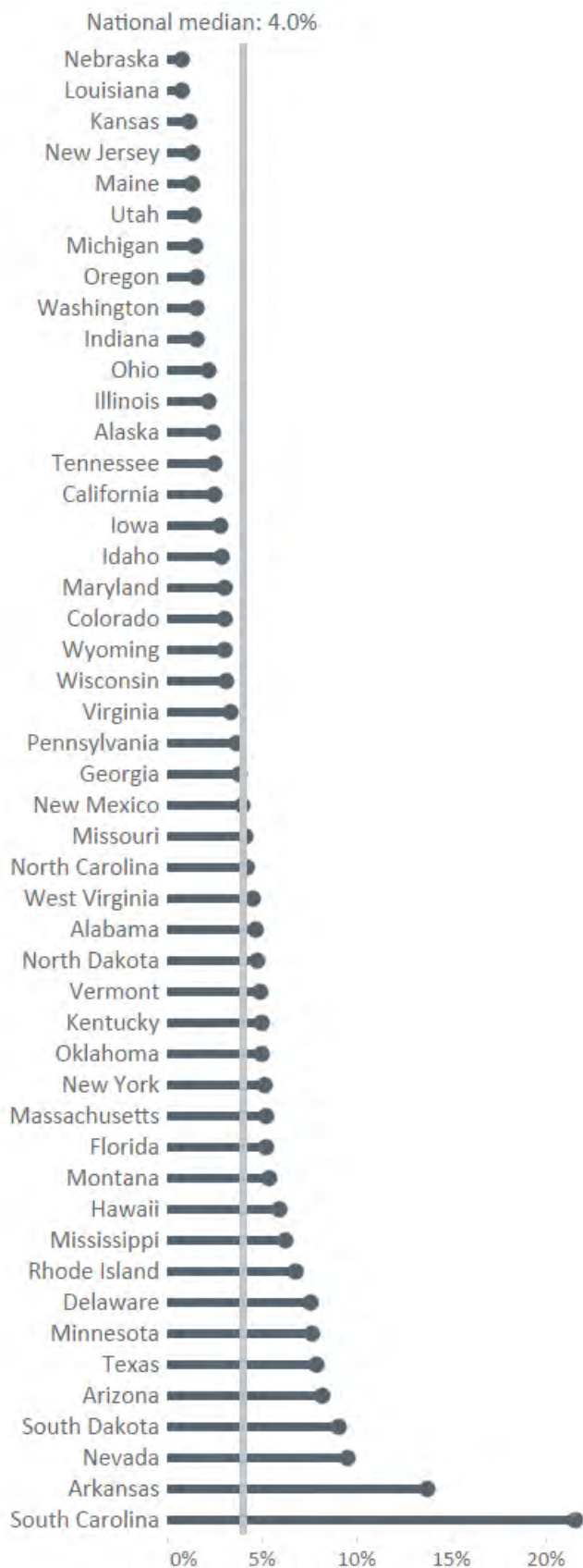


Figure V-4. Percent of Young Children Placed in Group Homes/Institutions, 2014 (N=48 States)*



*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available.

*Data in this chart include all states for which adequate data are available. Note: For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

Table V-3. Outcome 6.1a: Percent of Children in Care Less Than 12 Months With 2 or Fewer Placement Settings, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	82.7%	75.1%	80.7%	83.0%	81.5%	-1.4%
Arizona	87.2%	87.0%	86.6%	85.1%	83.1%	-4.8%
Arkansas	76.3%	75.9%	77.0%	77.3%	75.2%	-1.5%
California	84.2%	83.8%	83.9%	84.7%	84.6%	0.4%
Colorado	84.4%	84.7%	85.2%	84.9%	84.0%	-0.5%
Delaware	84.8%	83.1%	80.5%	84.0%	86.3%	1.8%
Florida	85.1%	85.9%	85.7%	87.5%	85.4%	0.2%
Georgia	75.4%	80.5%	80.3%	78.5%	78.9%	4.7%
Hawaii	89.4%	91.7%	88.8%	90.3%	86.8%	-3.0%
Idaho	88.5%	90.2%	86.9%	87.1%	89.3%	0.8%
Illinois	82.7%	81.8%	80.6%	83.6%	84.5%	2.2%
Indiana	88.4%	89.1%	88.4%	89.5%	89.6%	1.4%
Iowa	88.4%	87.5%	86.6%	87.3%	86.1%	-2.5%
Kansas	82.6%	83.4%	83.9%	82.1%	79.5%	-3.8%
Kentucky	88.4%	88.4%	88.5%	88.6%	88.1%	-0.4%
Louisiana	78.4%	79.1%	83.9%	84.0%	82.8%	5.6%
Maine	88.0%	82.9%	87.8%	87.6%	89.1%	1.1%
Maryland	85.3%	87.9%	85.2%	86.7%	87.6%	2.7%
Massachusetts	75.4%	78.6%	80.9%	80.2%	76.6%	1.6%
Michigan	87.7%	88.1%	87.5%	87.8%	87.2%	-0.6%
Minnesota	87.9%	87.0%	86.3%	87.1%	87.5%	-0.4%
Mississippi	80.7%	77.9%	80.7%	80.1%	79.5%	-1.5%
Missouri	67.6%	69.6%	76.2%	73.1%	79.6%	17.8%
Montana	87.0%	87.2%	87.8%	87.6%	86.8%	-0.2%
Nebraska	85.2%	85.7%	84.9%	86.3%	88.9%	4.4%
Nevada	83.7%	81.6%	83.1%	82.8%	80.0%	-4.5%
New Jersey	86.9%	87.8%	89.0%	88.3%	88.3%	1.5%
New Mexico	89.4%	87.5%	85.1%	83.6%	82.7%	-7.5%
New York	90.0%	90.1%	90.5%	89.9%	90.1%	0.1%
North Carolina	92.2%	91.6%	91.6%	91.3%	91.4%	-0.8%
North Dakota	85.1%	82.4%	74.4%	80.4%	79.6%	-6.5%
Ohio	91.2%	90.9%	88.7%	88.1%	87.8%	-3.7%
Oklahoma	72.2%	73.9%	71.6%	74.0%	77.2%	6.9%
Oregon	88.0%	88.3%	86.9%	87.0%	87.8%	-0.3%
Rhode Island	86.6%	87.2%	87.8%	88.6%	87.9%	1.5%
South Carolina	79.9%	81.4%	83.8%	86.5%	84.9%	6.2%
South Dakota	88.4%	86.7%	87.0%	86.7%	87.4%	-1.2%
Tennessee	77.2%	82.4%	79.5%	79.4%	77.8%	0.8%
Texas	84.5%	83.2%	83.6%	84.4%	84.9%	0.5%
Utah	79.9%	80.0%	79.2%	76.2%	73.7%	-7.8%
Vermont	73.6%	71.5%	72.2%	75.6%	78.6%	6.8%
Virginia	89.0%	88.6%	88.3%	86.0%	85.9%	-3.5%
Washington	87.6%	86.4%	86.8%	84.6%	83.4%	-4.8%
Wisconsin	87.3%	87.5%	85.0%	87.1%	86.7%	-0.7%
Wyoming	86.8%	86.9%	91.3%	88.3%	90.6%	4.3%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table V-4. Outcome 6.1b: Percent of Children in Care At Least 12 but Less Than 24 Months With 2 or Fewer Placement Settings, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	56.7%	62.4%	53.9%	59.0%	67.7%	19.4%
Arizona	69.8%	69.8%	71.0%	70.8%	68.7%	-1.5%
Arkansas	45.5%	44.9%	48.1%	50.3%	48.4%	6.3%
California	62.1%	63.4%	63.1%	64.1%	66.0%	6.2%
Colorado	56.8%	62.9%	63.4%	54.5%	56.0%	-1.5%
Delaware	64.0%	69.2%	62.5%	61.9%	66.1%	3.4%
Florida	63.7%	65.1%	64.8%	65.8%	65.9%	3.5%
Georgia	47.9%	54.9%	57.0%	54.6%	53.7%	12.3%
Hawaii	69.6%	69.1%	71.5%	73.2%	70.0%	0.6%
Idaho	63.8%	61.6%	63.2%	67.3%	66.8%	4.7%
Illinois	67.2%	63.6%	65.6%	64.8%	67.5%	0.5%
Indiana	67.0%	67.5%	71.9%	69.4%	72.4%	8.1%
Iowa	61.4%	64.3%	64.8%	63.6%	64.0%	4.2%
Kansas	56.8%	63.5%	66.3%	64.9%	64.4%	13.5%
Kentucky	62.1%	64.4%	66.5%	66.9%	65.1%	4.9%
Louisiana	52.0%	56.5%	55.2%	60.9%	61.4%	18.0%
Maine	67.4%	68.6%	65.0%	74.6%	76.9%	14.2%
Maryland	72.2%	70.5%	70.2%	70.8%	70.2%	-2.7%
Massachusetts	48.9%	49.1%	53.3%	56.7%	57.2%	16.8%
Michigan	73.6%	74.4%	74.0%	73.6%	70.9%	-3.7%
Minnesota	60.0%	62.5%	57.9%	59.0%	62.9%	4.8%
Mississippi	55.9%	52.4%	51.4%	57.7%	58.8%	5.3%
Missouri	50.7%	54.0%	57.1%	57.0%	62.0%	22.3%
Montana	60.7%	64.9%	66.1%	68.0%	68.1%	12.2%
Nebraska	57.4%	58.6%	64.3%	65.9%	68.8%	19.8%
Nevada	61.8%	61.6%	58.0%	61.2%	60.2%	-2.6%
New Jersey	72.6%	72.5%	71.4%	72.4%	72.2%	-0.6%
New Mexico	60.6%	57.7%	56.4%	50.8%	48.9%	-19.3%
New York	71.7%	72.4%	72.0%	73.9%	73.8%	3.0%
North Carolina	76.3%	77.0%	76.2%	76.1%	75.8%	-0.6%
North Dakota	60.6%	52.4%	53.3%	50.9%	51.1%	-15.5%
Ohio	72.4%	72.3%	67.6%	66.1%	68.5%	-5.3%
Oklahoma	47.2%	47.6%	49.7%	50.8%	53.9%	14.4%
Oregon	68.1%	69.5%	70.4%	71.3%	70.3%	3.2%
Rhode Island	65.5%	62.7%	64.2%	68.9%	75.6%	15.3%
South Carolina	45.8%	48.8%	52.9%	56.2%	58.2%	27.0%
South Dakota	57.1%	60.2%	51.8%	57.1%	63.1%	10.6%
Tennessee	52.0%	59.1%	61.6%	60.7%	60.9%	17.0%
Texas	56.6%	56.6%	57.9%	57.6%	57.6%	1.8%
Utah	44.5%	50.3%	50.0%	44.1%	44.0%	-1.2%
Vermont	45.1%	45.5%	45.1%	43.8%	51.0%	13.1%
Virginia	71.4%	67.1%	64.7%	65.9%	66.4%	-7.0%
Washington	67.4%	67.7%	67.9%	67.7%	66.5%	-1.4%
Wisconsin	68.0%	66.8%	67.7%	67.0%	70.4%	3.6%
Wyoming	56.1%	58.8%	64.2%	69.5%	67.2%	19.8%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table V-5. Outcome 6.1c: Percent of Children in Care More Than 24 Months With 2 or Fewer Placement Settings, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	26.8%	28.4%	32.0%	28.6%	30.2%	12.9%
Arizona	37.1%	39.9%	41.1%	43.8%	42.2%	13.6%
Arkansas	20.5%	20.3%	20.5%	22.3%	21.0%	2.3%
California	32.0%	33.1%	33.9%	34.2%	36.4%	13.6%
Colorado	33.0%	30.7%	34.2%	23.5%	25.8%	-21.9%
Delaware	26.3%	27.9%	35.2%	32.7%	32.2%	22.5%
Florida	28.2%	26.6%	28.9%	33.0%	34.6%	22.8%
Georgia	25.7%	27.5%	30.0%	32.8%	32.5%	26.1%
Hawaii	36.4%	43.0%	46.0%	44.4%	49.3%	35.3%
Idaho	34.3%	29.0%	26.2%	27.2%	33.1%	-3.5%
Illinois	38.2%	36.5%	36.5%	36.0%	36.1%	-5.5%
Indiana	37.9%	38.9%	37.0%	39.3%	43.3%	14.4%
Iowa	25.7%	26.5%	27.6%	26.3%	27.4%	6.8%
Kansas	27.7%	27.3%	35.2%	39.5%	41.7%	50.6%
Kentucky	31.3%	32.8%	38.4%	40.4%	44.1%	41.0%
Louisiana	27.8%	35.7%	36.4%	33.8%	34.1%	22.9%
Maine	34.3%	35.0%	35.5%	36.5%	44.2%	28.8%
Maryland	46.1%	46.5%	40.3%	40.5%	42.4%	-8.0%
Massachusetts	23.4%	24.2%	25.1%	25.4%	29.1%	24.7%
Michigan	44.6%	44.7%	47.6%	48.5%	44.2%	-1.0%
Minnesota	29.9%	31.3%	32.9%	32.7%	32.0%	7.3%
Mississippi	28.1%	29.7%	30.7%	30.6%	33.5%	19.4%
Missouri	24.6%	25.8%	30.2%	30.4%	33.3%	35.6%
Montana	35.7%	34.6%	37.2%	39.8%	41.8%	17.2%
Nebraska	26.3%	29.1%	33.4%	35.8%	33.8%	28.3%
Nevada	31.2%	31.8%	30.3%	29.2%	33.4%	7.0%
New Jersey	44.7%	45.8%	47.8%	50.4%	53.1%	18.8%
New Mexico	22.0%	20.9%	21.9%	23.1%	22.2%	1.2%
New York	43.8%	44.1%	45.0%	44.9%	46.4%	6.0%
North Carolina	42.7%	41.8%	43.4%	43.7%	44.3%	3.8%
North Dakota	40.1%	45.0%	40.1%	33.4%	41.0%	2.4%
Ohio	37.6%	39.6%	36.5%	34.7%	35.3%	-6.0%
Oklahoma	22.8%	21.8%	22.9%	24.8%	27.5%	20.8%
Oregon	32.8%	35.2%	39.6%	40.6%	41.5%	26.3%
Rhode Island	34.7%	34.4%	33.7%	38.6%	41.3%	19.0%
South Carolina	25.1%	26.1%	23.5%	23.4%	27.0%	7.5%
South Dakota	21.0%	18.8%	24.6%	26.0%	26.8%	27.7%
Tennessee	34.0%	33.3%	37.5%	41.1%	39.0%	14.7%
Texas	21.0%	21.2%	22.6%	23.4%	23.3%	10.9%
Utah	13.6%	12.1%	13.5%	15.4%	15.7%	15.4%
Vermont	20.9%	24.6%	23.6%	22.1%	25.5%	21.8%
Virginia	38.8%	36.3%	35.5%	36.5%	37.7%	-2.9%
Washington	39.2%	37.4%	39.6%	40.8%	41.4%	5.4%
Wisconsin	42.6%	44.6%	45.3%	45.4%	45.9%	7.7%
Wyoming	36.5%	34.2%	37.2%	36.7%	37.3%	2.4%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance.

Table V-6. Outcome 7.1: Percent of Children Age 12 or Younger Placed in Group Homes or Institutions, 2010–2014 (N=45 States)*

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percent Change in Performance, 2010–2014**
Alaska	2.3%	2.1%	2.7%	3.2%	2.4%	8.2%
Arizona	4.6%	6.3%	8.1%	8.8%	8.4%	83.8%
Arkansas	13.2%	13.6%	15.5%	13.5%	14.1%	6.4%
California	3.7%	2.7%	3.0%	2.4%	2.6%	-29.9%
Colorado	4.3%	4.6%	4.0%	3.1%	3.1%	-27.4%
Delaware	2.6%	2.0%	4.9%	2.9%	7.8%	197.4%
Florida	4.9%	5.7%	5.8%	5.1%	5.4%	8.9%
Georgia	5.0%	5.0%	4.1%	4.2%	3.9%	-20.6%
Hawaii	8.7%	10.1%	7.9%	9.2%	6.1%	-30.7%
Idaho	5.3%	4.7%	4.0%	3.3%	2.9%	-45.0%
Illinois	2.5%	2.8%	2.9%	2.5%	2.3%	-11.1%
Indiana	3.2%	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%	-48.6%
Iowa	3.3%	3.7%	2.4%	2.9%	2.9%	-12.5%
Kansas	1.4%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	-12.7%
Kentucky	5.4%	5.1%	4.5%	4.4%	5.1%	-4.7%
Louisiana	2.3%	1.2%	0.9%	1.3%	0.8%	-64.5%
Maine	4.1%	4.4%	4.6%	0.8%	1.4%	-66.3%
Maryland	3.0%	2.8%	3.4%	2.7%	3.1%	2.1%
Massachusetts	6.9%	5.9%	6.1%	6.2%	5.3%	-23.0%
Michigan	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	3.4%
Minnesota	13.8%	12.7%	12.5%	8.0%	7.8%	-43.0%
Mississippi	8.4%	6.3%	5.7%	5.9%	6.4%	-24.6%
Missouri	2.9%	2.6%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	46.9%
Montana	8.9%	8.9%	6.9%	5.8%	5.5%	-38.4%
Nebraska	3.2%	2.4%	2.2%	1.5%	0.8%	-74.9%
Nevada	5.7%	6.8%	5.4%	6.3%	9.7%	69.4%
New Jersey	2.5%	1.7%	1.9%	1.9%	1.4%	-46.6%
New Mexico	7.7%	3.9%	4.6%	5.5%	4.1%	-47.1%
New York	5.2%	4.1%	4.6%	6.0%	5.3%	1.7%
North Carolina	2.5%	2.6%	3.4%	3.4%	4.3%	74.2%
North Dakota	4.5%	7.8%	8.3%	6.8%	4.8%	6.9%
Ohio	2.3%	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	-3.8%
Oklahoma	10.3%	10.8%	9.6%	7.1%	5.1%	-50.3%
Oregon	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.6%	57.4%
Rhode Island	18.4%	11.8%	7.4%	8.3%	6.9%	-62.6%
South Carolina	20.9%	20.2%	21.3%	21.9%	22.0%	5.2%
South Dakota	11.2%	15.0%	10.8%	8.5%	9.3%	-17.2%
Tennessee	1.3%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	2.6%	90.1%
Texas	7.4%	7.6%	7.7%	7.5%	8.0%	8.6%
Utah	2.0%	2.3%	1.7%	1.4%	1.4%	-29.7%
Vermont	6.3%	6.5%	7.3%	6.2%	5.0%	-20.5%
Virginia	2.9%	3.8%	3.9%	4.0%	3.4%	19.0%
Washington	1.0%	1.2%	2.1%	1.7%	1.6%	65.3%
Wisconsin	4.5%	3.3%	4.1%	3.7%	3.2%	-29.6%
Wyoming	6.0%	5.6%	6.0%	4.9%	3.1%	-48.0%

*Data in this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years.

**A change of +/- 5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, and values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance. Note: For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

VI: State Comments on Performance Relevant to the Seven National Child Welfare Outcomes

The previous chapters provide key findings from analyses of performance across states over time relevant to the seven national child welfare outcomes. State-specific performance over time on these outcomes, as well as relevant state context data, are available in state data pages on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Prior to the release of the data on the data site and the report, states were given the opportunity to comment on their data. What follows are the state comments from those states that opted to provide context and comment on their state data. The comments have been printed exactly as they were submitted by the states. The comments are also available online on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Arkansas

Cecile Blucker, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Human Services

The following are Arkansas' comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

A future resubmission of data may change the Arkansas 2014 Children Adopted count of 737 to 742. After further review, five adoption records were not being counted due to a keying error in Element 34. In future AFCARS submissions, the state will review all cases listed as Private Agency for Element 34 to ensure accuracy.

Illinois

**George H. Sheldon, Director
Office of the Director
Department of Children & Family Services**

The following are Illinois' comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services wishes to clarify four data elements contained in the *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress*. IDCFS respectfully states that the data is incorrect in the following respects:

1. Illinois Context Data, Item B Child Maltreatment Data in particular Child Fatalities: The report to Congress reflects that Illinois experienced a 9.37% increase from Federal Fiscal year 2013 to Federal Fiscal year 2014. Recently submitted corrected files for 2014 reflect a 4.17% increase.
2. Illinois Context Data, Item D Characteristics of Children “Waiting for Adoption”: IDCFS states that the report to Congress understates by approximately 900 the number of waiting children whose parental rights were terminated in 2014. IDCFS contacted the Children’s Bureau on March 7, 2016 to question this discrepancy and we look forward to working with them to resolve it.
3. Illinois Context Data, Item E Characteristics of Children Adopted: IDCFS contends the number of children adopted in 2014 is significantly understated. IDCFS data reflects that 1,766 children were adopted in 2014. IDCFS contacted the Children’s Bureau on March 7, 2016 to question this discrepancy and the response received on March 15th indicates that the values for Element 34 in Illinois’ 14A Adoption File were missing. Illinois will be resubmitting Adoption Files to reflect this information for Element 34, which will support that IDCFS had more children adopted during this period.
4. Illinois Outcomes Data, Item 2.1 Maltreatment in Foster Care: IDCFS resubmitted data files for 2009–2015 that are not reflected in this report. The corrected files show an improvement for those years and this should be reflected in this report to Congress. Specifically, the corrected data is: 2010—99.73%; 2011—99.68%; 2012: 99.65%; 2013—99.62%; 2014—99.52%.

Iowa

Wendy A. Rickman, Administrator
Division of Adult Child and Family Services
Department of Human Services

The following are Iowa's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

The Iowa Department of Human Services continues to experience improvements in the outcomes for the children and families we serve. Family team decision-making, collaborative efforts with the courts and stakeholders, Differential Response, and strong public/private partnerships improve outcomes for children and families. Iowa reduced the number of children in care, increased the percentage of children in foster care receiving monthly visits and the percentage of relative placements, and observed a decline in the number of child victims who experienced maltreatment. Key areas that challenge our system include complex family characteristics such as the intersection of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence by parents, placement stability for children in care, increase in caseload growth, and declining IV-E funding.

Section B (Child Maltreatment Data): The rate of abuse in Iowa decreased over the last several years due to our continued efforts to improve our intake processes, to develop alternatives to assist families, and to prevent the need for removal of children from their homes. In addition, Iowa implemented Differential Response in 2014, which Iowa believes assisted in the decrease of total child maltreatment victims.

The change in childfile response time is due to more accurate reporting through adding the actual time of report and investigation start date to the submission. The agency file response time is used as a performance measure and is comparable to the child file calculation.

Section C (Child in Foster Care): In FFY 2014, Iowa experienced a decline in Iowa's foster care population, which had increased in FFY 2013, that reflects the trend of previous years.

Sections D and E (Adoption): In FFY 2014, children adopted through Iowa's foster care population decreased slightly. However, Iowa's population of children who are adopted annually continues to remain high even as the foster care population declines.

Outcome Measure 1.1: Iowa's top priority is child safety. We have continued to focus on strengthening risk and safety assessment, developing strong safety plans, and engaging providers in safety and risk discussions.

Outcome Measure 2.1: Preventing subsequent harm when a child is placed in foster care is a key component of ensuring child safety. Recruitment, training, and support for foster parents in Iowa is completed under contract with a consortium of local agencies to help ensure we are providing the supports that foster families need. In addition, we have built safety related performance measures into our contracts for other out of home services such as group care and shelter. The reduction of maltreatment while in foster care is a key indicator of the success of these efforts.

Outcome Measure 4.2: The number of children re-entering foster care continues to be a challenge in Iowa. The state is focusing on engaging relatives and increasing the use of family team decision making as part of our strategy to move foster children to more lasting permanent settings.

Kansas

**Jaime Rogers, Interim Director
Prevention and Protection Services
Department for Children and Families**

The following are Kansas' comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Section B (Child Maltreatment Data): The total number of child maltreatment victims decreased by 3% from FFY 2013 to 2014.

Section 1.1 (Outcomes Data): The percentage of children without a recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months has increased from FFY 2013 to 2014 and Kansas continues to exceed the national performance standard.

Section 3.1 (Outcomes Data): The percentage of children exiting from foster care for adoption and reunification have both increased from FFY 2013 to 2014.

Louisiana

**Rhenda H. Hodnett, Deputy Secretary for Programs
Department of Children and Family Services**

The following are Louisiana's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

The increase in number of maltreatment victims (especially neglect victims) since 2012 may be attributable to several factors:

- The number of referrals to the Alternative Response/Family Assessment Program (ARFA) program, which did not assign validity decision, gradually declined until the program ended in August of 2014. The end of the differential response program resulted in a larger pool of potential investigation victims.
- Dissolution of the ARFA Program also could have played a role in the change in the percentage of victims by allegation category because neglect reports were more likely to be assigned to ARFA than physical abuse reports. The percentage of physical abuse victims decreased while the percentage of neglect victims increased in 2013 and 2014.

The increase in Foster Care entry rate may have been influenced by the ever rising number of substance exposed newborns, especially in the entry rate of children under age one, which increased by two percentage points. The median number of months in foster care declined in 2014 due to efforts to achieve permanency more quickly. According to our internal analysis, the number of children who enter foster care and remain for less than 60 days has increased. These 'short-stayers' reduce the median time in foster care but are a cause for concern.

Since 2011 Louisiana has ranked first in the nation in CFSR Round 2 Permanency Composite 2-Timeliness of Adoptions. However, the number of children adopted in 2014 declined from prior years, possibly influenced by continuing successes in strategies aimed at reducing the time to permanence (Faith in Families Initiative, collaboration with faith-based and other community partners, and targeted recruiters). The total number of children waiting for adoption increased slightly from 2013 to 2014 but remains lower than any of the prior years.

Maryland

**Rebecca Jones Gaston, Acting Executive Director
Social Services Administration
Department of Human Resources**

The following are Maryland's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

The *Child Welfare Outcomes* report for this time period continues to reflect a substantial downward trend in foster care placements, which in Maryland has been underway since 2007, while not adversely impacting child safety. Throughout the implementation of Place Matters, the state's recurrence of maltreatment has average 6.8%. Under Maryland's Place Matters initiative, DHR implemented a Family-Centered Practice model, which focuses attention on families' natural support systems to bolster their capacity to care for their children, and develops service plans based on comprehensive assessments. Family Involvement Meetings encourage family participation in making decisions about the needs of their children, as well as decisions about reunification or making other permanent exits from foster care, including guardianship placement or adoptive placement. These efforts often result in identifying relatives and other community resources for families struggling with child maltreatment. The state expects continued success with its Family-Centered Practice Model.

Maryland has fully implemented Alternative Response which enables the state to address low risk cases of child abuse and neglect. Alternative Response permits the state to intervene to ensure safety and address risk without the stigma of a finding of maltreatment being attached to the parent. It should be noted that in its first year of reporting child abuse and neglect, Maryland inadvertently counted children served in Alternative Response as victims, thereby artificially inflating the state's statistics concerning child victims. This has been corrected and next year's report will reflect a downward, not an upward, trend in child victims in Maryland.

Reentry into foster care within 12 months of a prior episode of foster care has varied from 11% to 14% over the last few years, and continues to be studied. An in-depth analysis and report on Maryland's challenges around reentry after reunification was released in April 2015, containing predictive and protective factors that significantly impact the reentry rate, and contains several recommendations for ensuring successful reunification that are being reviewed for implementation. Maryland has also begun initial planning and implementation of its IV-E Waiver demonstration (Families Blossom) which is focused on reducing entries, reentries, and shifting Maryland to trauma-informed system of care in partnership with public and community providers.

Overall, Maryland has experienced considerable success with its Place Matters initiative featuring Family-Centered Practice, and expects that Alternative Response, now underway, and its new Families Blossom demonstration, will positively impact the children and families served.

Massachusetts

Linda Spears, Commissioner
Department of Children and Families
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

The following are Massachusetts' comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Safety

In August of 2009, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) implemented a differential response (DR) process for handling reports of child maltreatment in its SACWIS (FamilyNet). With DR, reports could be screened-in for a CPS investigation or for an initial assessment (IA) response. An IA response allowed DCF to engage families differently when the reported concern did not warrant a formal investigation. An IA response could not be used for reports alleging sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or serious neglect. IA responses do not result in findings of support or unsupport and have been reported on NCANDS as "Alternative Response Nonvictim". IA responses grew to 41% of the combined CPS responses in 2013. Following several tragic, publicized child welfare cases in 2013, the number of child abuse and neglect reports rose while the percentage and count screened out decreased, resulting in an increase in the overall number of responses. As a result of these events the Commissioner issued a directive to screen reportable conditions for an investigation response if there was a child in the home under age 6 and where specific clinical indicators were present (i.e., parental substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, prior report history, parent/caregiver history with the child welfare system as a child, presence of an unrelated adult in the household without a biological or emotional connection to the child(ren) and/or prenatal substance exposure). This resulted in a decrease in the reports screened for IA and a concomitant increase in victimization rate from 2013 to 2014.

Placement

- The number of children in care decreased significantly from 2008 to 2012, stabilized during ffy2013, and rose significantly during ffy2014.
- Placement stability slowly and steadily increased from 2007 to 2013. This trend continued in ffy2014, for children in placement at least 12 months but declined for children in placement less than 12 months.

Michigan

Steve Yager, Executive Director
Children's Services Agency
Department of Health and Human Services

The following are Michigan's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Child Welfare Vision

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will lead the state in supporting our children, youth and families to reach their full potential.

Child Welfare Mission

Child welfare professionals will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to engage and partner with families we serve to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being through a trauma-informed approach.

The vision and mission are achieved through the following guiding principles:

- Safety is the first priority of the child welfare system.
- Families, children, youth and caregivers will be treated with dignity and respect while having a voice in decisions that affect them.
- The ideal place for children is with their families; therefore, we will ensure children remain in their own homes whenever safely possible.
- When placement away from the family is necessary, children will be placed in the most family-like setting and placed with siblings whenever possible.
- The impact of traumatic stress on child and family development is recognized and used to inform intervention strategies.
- The well-being of children is recognized and promoted by building relationships, developing child competencies and strengthening formal and informal community resources.
- Permanent connections with siblings and caring and supportive adults will be preserved and encouraged.
- Children will be reunited with their families and siblings as soon as safely possible.
- Community stakeholders and tribes will be actively engaged to protect children and support families.
- Child welfare professionals will be supported through identifying and addressing secondary traumatic stress, ongoing development and mentoring to promote success and retention.
- Leadership will be demonstrated within all levels of the child welfare system.
- Decision making will be outcome-based, research-drive and continuously evaluated for improvement.

Michigan is dedicated to providing the most accurate data possible through our NCANDS and AFCARS submissions.

During FY2014, MDHHS implemented a new statewide automated child welfare information system, MISACWIS. As staff become more familiar with the MISACWIS system, the validity of data will improve.

The total number of children in foster care for FY2014 has decreased, along with a reduction in the median length of stay. This decrease can be attributed to staffs' dedicated attention to utilizing the principles of Michigan's case practice model when working with children and their families: Teaming, Engagement, Assessment and Mentoring.

The reduction of maltreatment of children in foster care and recurrence of maltreatment continues to be a priority for Michigan. Improvements to MISACWIS system will allow for future reporting of maltreatment in care.

Michigan did not meet the standard for timeliness to reunification, however Michigan continues to exceed the median for children re-entering foster care within twelve month of reunification. Michigan believes it is important to reunify children with their families as quickly as possible.

Michigan successfully completed the CFSR Round 2 program improvement plan.

MDHHS is committed to improving our state's performance in outcomes related to child safety, permanency and well-being.

Missouri

**Tim Decker, Director
Children's Division
Department of Social Services**

The following are Missouri's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Missouri continues to be dedicated to providing the most accurate data possible through our NCANDS and AFCARS transmissions. We persist in our efforts to enhance our data systems to more thoroughly detail compliance with the mandates of ASFA and to better serve families.

Child safety is a priority for the Children's Division. Missouri experienced an increase number of children with a maltreatment type of neglect for 2010–2014. Missouri's child abuse law defines neglect as a failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition, medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child's well-being.

Missouri has experienced an increase in the foster care population. While Missouri has seen an increase of children entering care for the first time, there has been a decrease in children re-entering care within twelve months of a prior episode. The rate of entries is exceeding the rate of exits; however, exits to guardianship have continued to increase during 2010–2014. The seeming discrepancy in Section D, between the number of children awaiting adoption and the number of children having a termination of parental rights, is reflective of the practice in some Missouri courts to delay termination of parental rights until an adoptive home has been found for a specific child or sibling group. Often these courts terminate parental rights and finalize adoptions in the same court proceeding.

Despite the increased number of foster children, Missouri achieved 98% on the frequency of caseworker visits with children during 2012–2014. Missouri has continually improved the percent of children having visits by caseworkers since 2008. A performance measure report as well as a tracking tool in the SACWIS system allow for staff to maintain high frequency of visits with children in out-of-home care. Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement efforts additionally address the quality of visits.

Missouri has implemented a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process which monitors and identifies areas of strength and areas needing improvement at both the statewide and local levels. The CQI process monitors all aspects of the service delivery from child abuse and neglect reports to permanency. The Division continually strives to improve our ability to serve youth and families in our care.

New Hampshire

Lorraine Bartlett, Director
Division for Children, Youth & Families
Department of Health and Human Services

The following are New Hampshire's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Our work with families, the courts, public and private agencies, faith-based organizations, elected officials, businesses and community advocates, is part of an intentional effort to truly transform practice. In order to identify priorities, target resources, and redesign the way in which services are delivered in New Hampshire true partnership and collaboration is a must. The data reflects our on-going process and commitment to examining and improving our own capacity and performance.

New Hampshire continues to successfully focus on reducing the risk of harm to children, as evidenced by the data on repeat maltreatment and the absence of maltreatment in foster care. NCANDS Data for the Absence of Child Abuse and Neglect in Foster Care was at 100% in FY 2014 and has remained at 100% for the last 5 years. New Hampshire has met the national standard for Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment Within 6 Months for the last 5 years and has reached the lowest rate of occurrence at 0.7% for FFY 2014.

For FFY 2012 through FFY 2014 using the new Caseworker Visit method we have exceeded the number for caseworker visits made on a monthly basis as well as complying with the type of visits made being over 50% in the child's residence.

Our state has made many changes and enhancements to the AFCARS report and is still in the process of doing so. One particular enhancement that affects the report child numbers is that we now include Juvenile Justice youth after they have entered a IV-E eligible placement for the first time within that removal episode. They are included in the reporting until they are discharged from this episode regardless of whether they go from a IV-E eligible placement back to a non-IV-E eligible placement again. It is estimated that there are approximately 300 more youth in the report per FFY.

Another enhancement that is in development is the Trial Home Visit. We currently enter trial home visit information manually into the SACWIS (State Automated Child Welfare Information System) for most children. We are implementing a Trial Home Visit method in the case management system that automates the process and ensures data integrity when applying a trial home visit to a child or youth.

An improvement that may affect Measure 3.4 Exits to Emancipation is that although we do not practice Emancipation in our state, we do make this selection for Element 58: Exit Reason. We now map our state reasons of Independent Living, Aged Out, if youth has turned 19 years of age in the report period and Planned Permanent Living Arrangement to this element.

New Jersey

**Lisa von Pier, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Child Protection & Permanency
Department of Children and Families**

The following are New Jersey's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

NJ investigates all reports of child abuse and neglect. In 2013, new regulation took effect modifying the Department of Children and Families' dispositions following child abuse and neglect investigations. A new system of investigation was created and based on four tiers; Substantiated, Established, Not Established and Unfounded. Both Substantiated and Established findings are categorized as substantiated in NCANDS where the child has been a victim of abuse or neglect. As a result, NJ anticipated an increase in overall Substantiated reports for 2014. The number of unique children who were the subject of an investigated report due to maltreatment decreased slightly from 2013 to 2014 (75,794 in 2013 and 75,691 in 2014). Sixteen percent of these children were victims of maltreatment in 2014 in comparison to 13% percent in 2013.

NJ achieved 99% compliance in the number of monthly Caseworker Visits with children in foster care for 2014.

The foster care entry rate slightly decreased from 2.6 in 2013 to 2.5 in 2014. Fewer children entered foster care in 2014 than in 2013 (5,342 in 2013 and 5,046 in 2014). The median length of stay for children in care on the first day of the year continues to decrease from 15 months in 2010 to 13 months in 2014. Fewer children exited care in 2014 (5,065 in 2013 and 4,717 in 2014), however, the median length of stay has remained under 13 months over the last 3 years.

NJ's commitment toward achieving permanency for children is ongoing. Ninety-one percent of children in care exited to permanency through adoption, guardianship or reunification exceeding the 89% National Median.

The number of children re-entering foster care decreased from 1,106 in 2013 to 1,055 in 2014. Seventy-nine percent of the children that entered care in 2014, entered for the first time.

NJ continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to permanency for older youth in care as the number of children who entered care older than 12 years of age and who exited to adoption, guardianship or reunification increased by 5% over five years, from 59% in 2010 to 64% in 2014.

NJ continues to strive for placement stability and exceeds the National Standard having 88% of children in care less than 12 months, 72% of children in care 12 to 24 months, and 53% of children in care 24 months or longer in 2 or fewer placement settings.

Finally, the number of children age 12 years or younger that are placed in a group home or institutional setting remains under 2% since 2011.

Ohio

**Jennifer R. Justice, Deputy Director
Office of Families and Children
Department of Job and Family Services**

The following are Ohio's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

In Ohio's 2014 NCANDS file, six child fatality records were removed by the federal NCANDS validation process as more than one child abuse or neglect report was recorded for each of these children. Ohio resubmitted the NCANDS file to ensure that these children were included, but the resubmission was after the deadline for the child maltreatment report. The actual number of NCANDS child fatalities for federal fiscal year 2014 in Ohio was 51.

Oregon

Lois Day, Director
Office of Child Welfare Programs
Department of Human Services

The following are Oregon's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

At this time, Oregon is pleased to report that the data coming from AFCARS and NCANDS has been updated to reflect accurate information for the foster care population for the data reported in the Child Welfare Outcomes report. Oregon does continue to work on reporting certain elements, which largely do not impact this report.

Oregon began a phased implementation of a two track response system called Differential Response (DR) in May of 2014. As of September 30, 2015, there were nine of Oregon's 36 counties using the system. The anticipated completion date for all of Oregon is fall of 2017. The two types of response tracks within the DR system are Traditional Responses (TR) and Alternative Responses (AR). Data is reported in the NCANDS Child File for all screened-in Child Protective Services (CPS) reports, regardless of Differential Response Track. Alternative Response Track CPS reports will have Report and Maltreatment Dispositions of "Alternative response nonvictim" as the response option.

The following data notes are important to understand when interpreting Oregon's NCANDS data

- Prior to 2012, the number of children subjects of an investigated report alleging child maltreatment is an estimate. The Oregon legacy system did not collect data at the child level on non-victims.
- Oregon's maltreatment type "threat of harm" is captured in the category of "Other."
- In Oregon, all reports of child abuse/neglect that are referred for investigation are assigned a response time. There are two types of response times in Oregon: "within 24 hours" and "within 5 days."

Oregon is committed to providing the most accurate data possible through AFCARS and NCANDS transmissions.

Rhode Island

Jamia R. McDonald, Chief Strategy Officer
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

The following are Rhode Island's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

- **Child Fatalities:** Rhode Island reports child fatalities in the year that the investigation is completed. RI reported 6 fatalities in FFY 2014. Three of those fatalities occurred in FFY 2014, 2 occurred in FFY 2013, and one occurred in FFY 2009.
- **Maltreatment Type:** The increase in the percentage of child victims subject to emotional abuse increase from 0.3% in FFY 2013 to 19.8% in FFY 2014. The percentage of child victims subject to neglect decreased from 92.3% in FFY 2013 to 79.1% in FFY 2014. This change is the result of Rhode Island adding a specific allegation of 'domestic violence.' Previously, incidents involving domestic violence were recorded under the allegation of 'other neglect'. As a separate allegation, domestic violence is now reported to NCANDS under emotional abuse.
- **Re-entry into Foster Care:** RI does not have a state statute or policy allowing for a trial home visit. Therefore, reunification and re-entry is based on the physical, and not legal, reunification of the child. As a result, RI will appear to have an artificially higher rate of re-entry compared to states with trial home visits. RI continues to work on its re-entry performance and re-entry is at its lowest level in 5 years.
- **Young children in group homes:** RI has reduced the percentage of young children in group homes from 18.4% in FFY 2010 to 6.5% in FFY 2014. We continue to work diligently to reduce the number of young children in group home placements.

Brent Platt
Division of Child and Family Services
Department of Human Services

The following are Utah's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010-2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

The State of Utah, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), submits the following comments regarding the Utah Data contained in the *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010 to 2014: Report to Congress*.

Utah experienced changes in Maltreatment Types of Child Victims from 2011 to 2012, in the Maltreatment Types of Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, and Other. Utah has a law defining some domestic violence as a type of child abuse, which Utah includes in the maltreatment type grouping of Emotional Abuse. This unique law may have contributed to higher percentages in Emotional Abuse prior to 2011. The legal definition was changed in 2011, narrowing what constitutes domestic violence related child abuse, which may have led to the percentage decrease of Emotional Abuse victims from 2011 to 2012. Additionally in 2011, Utah's NCANDS State Liaison requested that Utah change the NCANDS mapping of maltreatment categories to move child endangerment from the "Other" category to "Physical Abuse," resulting in a decrease of "Other" and an increase in "Physical Abuse."

Utah is dedicated to maintaining family connections and making every effort to place children with kinship caregivers when a child cannot safely remain in their home. When a child must be placed in protective custody, a Judge may order custody of the child to DCFS, or order temporary custody of the child to a kinship caregiver and order that DCFS provide supervision and reunification services. When a child is placed in the custody of a kinship caregiver, rather than the custody of DCFS, the child is not included in the AFCARS foster care population; therefore, Utah's utilization of kinship caregivers may be underrepresented in AFCARS. If reunification efforts of a child placed with a kinship caregiver are unsuccessful, the child may be adopted by the kinship caregiver. Adoptions from these in-home services are included in Utah's AFCARS adoption data, but are not included in the number of children adopted from foster care.

Washington

**Jennifer A. Strus, Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration
Department of Social and Health Services**

The following are Washington's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Child safety is at the forefront of every aspect of our work as we endeavor to:

- Maintain children in their own homes and prevent out-of-home placement
- Serve and support children during the time they are in out-of-home care
- Return children home safely as quickly as possible
- Support children in homes of fit and willing relatives
- Secure permanent families for children who cannot safely return home
- Decrease the over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system

For this reporting period, the percent of children not maltreated while in foster care increased to 99.84%. Washington has strong performance related to Exits of Children from Foster Care (93.9%) and Exits of Children Older Than Age 12 at Entry (75.4%) and has shown an increase in the percentage of children reunifying in less than 12 months.

Washington State is taking active steps to continue to improve safe, timely outcomes for children through:

- Implementation of differential response
- Close monitoring of timeliness of initial face-to-face contact with alleged child victims
- Focused attention on engagement with children and families in shared planning meetings to facilitate timely identification and implementation of appropriate permanency plans

Washington's Title IV-E Waiver demonstration project involves the implementation of differential response with one alternative pathway called Family Assessment Response (FAR). Implementation of FAR began in January 2014 and, as of December 2015, it is available in 32 field offices across the state. The FAR pathway provides for increased engagement with families. Evaluation of the pathway and its impact on families and child welfare outcomes is ongoing.

Washington, like many states, is experiencing challenges which impact outcomes throughout the system. These difficulties have included a significant increase in referrals to our system, over 100% between November 2013 and November 2015 in cases requiring a 24 hour response, families and children presenting with increased complexity, and increase in Child and Family Welfare Services caseloads. Washington regrettably is also not immune to the opioid crisis impacting our country right now. Social safety net reductions at the state and national level have increased the number of problems facing our families while decreasing available resources.

Efforts to review, analyze and plan to improve the safety and permanency outcomes for children and their families are ongoing. Updated training on safety and risk assessment and intervention is being provided for caseworkers and supervisors, an internal process to review cases that have identified a child as a victim in ten or more prior screened-in intakes has been implemented, and efforts to streamline and reduce caseworker workload are in process.

The Governor and Washington State Legislature are committed to management accountability and performance measurement. Children's Administration tracks performance and reports publicly on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and uses data for decision-making.

Wisconsin

Fredi-Ellen Bove, Administrator
Division of Safety and Permanence
Department of Children and Families

The following are Wisconsin's comments on the state data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2010-2014: Report to Congress* and its related data site: <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Wisconsin's child welfare system is state-supervised and county-administered in 71 counties and state-administered in Milwaukee. Wisconsin's current focus areas are:

- **Promoting Trauma-Informed Approaches:** Scientific research has shown that traumatic experiences in childhood have a “toxic effect” and inhibit the healthy development of a child’s brain. As a result, a child’s cognitive development, social skills, behavior, and physical health are significantly impaired. Wisconsin is incorporating trauma-informed principles into our child welfare system, through training of child welfare workers, birth, foster, and adoptive parents, and facilitating the adoption of these principles in other state and local systems.
- **Strengthening In-home Safety:** Wisconsin is engaged in training child welfare workers and our court partners in how to engage in robust safety assessment and planning, including whether and how supports and services can be implemented to maintain a child safely in his or her own home whenever possible.
- **Achieving Timely Permanency:** The Department is applying a heightened urgency and creativity to achieving permanency for children in out-of-home care. We have established new tools through statute and administratively to reflect this philosophy, including permanency roundtables, family finding techniques, subsidized guardianship, and trial reunifications.
- **Reducing Re-entry:** Children in Wisconsin re-enter out-of-home care at a rate that far exceeds the federal standard. To reduce the re-entry rate and improve outcomes for children and families, Wisconsin has implemented the Post-reunification Support (PS) Program to provide services and supports to families in the initial twelve months after reunification. This program, which began in February 2014, is a Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration program.
- **Improving Health Outcomes:** DCF partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to implement Care4Kids, a medical home program for eligible children. The program, which began in January 2014, provides comprehensive and coordinated health care for children in out-of-home care in a way that reflects their unique health needs and trauma experiences. The program is improving children’s quality, access, and timeliness of health care.
- **Achieving Educational Success for Children in Out-of-Home Care:** In collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, local child welfare agencies and school districts, DCF is working on improving the educational outcomes for youth in foster care through: establishment of data exchanges between the child welfare and school systems; development of practices to promote timely information-sharing between the child welfare and school workers; training of school personnel about the needs to children in out-of-home care; and research on the educational outcomes of these children.
- **Supporting Youth Transition to Adulthood:** Youth who age out of foster care face significant challenges. Wisconsin’s Office of Youth Services is implementing a new regional service delivery system for independent living services and a housing pilot program for youth to strengthen permanent connections, education, training, and employment, housing, and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes for current and former foster youth.

Through these efforts, we expect to enhance the safety, stability, health, and quality of life for the children, families, and communities in our state.

Appendix A

Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-89)

SEC. 203. Performance of States in Protecting Children.

(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON STATE PERFORMANCE.—Part E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.) is amended by addition at the end of the following:

Sec 479A. Annual Report.

The Secretary, in consultation with Governors, State legislatures, State and local public officials responsible for administering child welfare programs, and child welfare advocates, shall—

- (1) develop a set of outcome measures (including length of stay in foster care, number of foster care placements, and number of adoptions) that can be used to assess the performance of States in operating child protection and child welfare programs pursuant to parts B and E to ensure the safety of children;
- (2) to the maximum extent possible, the outcome measures should be developed from data available from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System;
- (3) develop a system for rating the performance of States with respect to the outcome measures, and provide to the States an explanation of the rating system and how scores are determined under the rating system;
- (4) prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to ensure that States provide to the Secretary the data necessary to determine State performance with respect to each outcome measure, as a condition of the State receiving funds under this part;
- (5) on May 1, 1999, and annually thereafter, prepare and submit to the Congress a report on the performance of each State on each outcome measure, which shall examine the reasons for high performance and low performance and, where possible, make recommendations as to how State performance could be improved;
- (6) include in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (5) for fiscal year 2007 or any succeeding fiscal year, State-by-State data on—
 - (A) the percentage of children in foster care under the responsibility of the State who were visited on a monthly basis by the caseworker handling the case of the child;
 - (B) the total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care under the responsibility of the State during a fiscal year as a percentage of the total number of the visits that would occur during the fiscal year if each child were so visited once every month while in such care; and
 - (C) the percentage of the visits that occurred in the residence of the child; and
- (7)¹ include in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (5) for fiscal year 2016 or any succeeding fiscal year, State-by-State data on—
 - (A) children in foster care who have been placed in a child care institution or other setting that is not a foster family home, including —
 - (i) the number of children in the placements and their ages, including separately, the number and ages of children who have a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement;
 - (ii) the duration of the placement in the settings (including for children who have a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement);
 - (iii) the types of child care institutions used (including group homes, residential treatment, shelters, or other congregate care settings);
 - (iv) with respect to each child care institution or other setting that is not a foster family home, the number of children in foster care residing in each such institution or non-foster family home;

¹ Sec. 115 of P.L. 113-183 added sec. 479A(a)(7) and (b).

(v) any clinically diagnosed special need of such children; and

(vi) the extent of any specialized education, treatment, counseling, or other services provided in the settings; and

(B) children in foster care who are pregnant or parenting.

(b) CONSULTATION ON OTHER ISSUES.—The Secretary shall consult with States and organizations with an interest in child welfare, including organizations that provide adoption and foster care services, and shall take into account requests from Members of Congress, in selecting other issues to be analyzed and reported on under this section using data available to the Secretary, including data reported by States through the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and to the National Youth in Transition Database.

Appendix B

Child Welfare Outcomes Report: Outcomes and Measures

Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect

Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?¹

Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care

Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff?

Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care

Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care during the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care?

Measure 3.5: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage by racial/ethnic category left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry

Measure 4.1: Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in the following time periods?

- (a) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (b) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (c) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (d) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (e) 48 or more months

Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care:

- (a) Within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?
- (b) More than 12 months after a prior foster care episode?

Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption

Measure 5.1: Of all children discharged from foster care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in the following time periods?

- (a) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (b) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (c) At least 24 months but less than 36 months

¹ In this report, all references to “year” indicate a Federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Although alternate years are never used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) sometimes use alternate 12-month time periods in order to track progress over time.

- (d) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (e) 48 or more months

Outcome 6: Increase placement stability

Measure 6.1: Of all children served in foster care during the year who had been in care for the time periods listed below, what percentage had no more than two placement settings during that time period?

- (a) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (b) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (c) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (d) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (e) 48 or more months

Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

Measure 7.1: Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or an institution?

Appendix C

Caseworker Visits

States have been required to submit data on monthly caseworker visits since the passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-288), which amended Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (the Act). This amendment included new funding to partially support monthly caseworker visits with children who are in state foster care. Under Sections 424(f)(1) and (2) and 479A(6) of the Act, states were required to collect and report data on caseworker visits for fiscal year (FY) 2007 through FY 2011.¹ The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 (Pub. L. 112-34) extended the requirements for states to collect and report information on monthly caseworker visits in FY 2012 and continuing each FY thereafter. However, starting with 2012 data, states must use a new data reporting methodology required by Pub. L. 112-34 as outlined in sections 424(f)(1) and (2) of the Act. Pub. L. 112-34 extended funding under title IV-B of the Act for monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care through FY 2016.

While the calculation methodology of the measures has changed for the monthly caseworker visits data, the same data are collected, and both the old and new calculation methodologies seek to assess the adequacy of caseworker visits to children in foster care. The measures still assess the following:

- The frequency of the visits
- Whether or not the visits were conducted in the child's residence

Reporting Population

The reporting population subject to the caseworker visits requirements includes all children under age 18 for at least the first day of the FY (October 1) who have been in foster care for at least one full calendar month during the FY. Additional reporting population clarifications can be found in the Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01. This reporting population remains unchanged between the old and new requirements.

Changes Between FY 2007–2011 and FY 2012–2016 Calculations

Due to a change in calculation methodology, comparisons cannot be made between the FY 2007 to 2011 data and the FY 2012 to 2016 data. The focus of the old methodology was on individual children, and it counted each child as having been properly served only if visits were made in each full month the child was in foster care during the FY. If a state missed one monthly visit, no credit was given for having visited the child during the other 11 months of the year. The new calculation takes a broader view, examining the entire reporting population of children in foster care for a state to determine the adequacy of the visiting pattern as a whole.

Over the entire foster care reporting population, the first of the two measures (Monthly Caseworker Visits, or MCV) considers the percentage of visits to children in foster care that were made on a monthly basis. Then, a calculation is made of the percentage of those monthly visits that occurred in the residence of the child (Visits in the Home, or VIH). Due to the change in the calculation, Child Welfare Outcomes 2010–2014 will only report on 2012, 2013, and 2014 caseworker visits data. Data from prior years can be found on the Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data Site (<https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>). More details on the reporting approach are shown below, and references are given for the reader who desires additional information.

Data Reporting Methodology

This section will focus on the methodology for the new monthly caseworker visits calculations. Note that there are Program Instructions for both the old (2007–2011) and new (2012–2016) requirements that provide more detailed information.

2007–2011: For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for 2007 to 2011, please see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-03, issued April 18, 2008: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pi0803.pdf>

2012–2016: For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for 2012 to 2016, please see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01, issued January 6, 2012: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pi1201.pdf>

¹ The FY is the 12-month period beginning October 1 and ending September 30.

Calculation of Monthly Caseworker Visits (MCV)²

To calculate the percentage of required visits to children in foster care that were made on a monthly basis, the following data are required:

Denominator: the number of complete calendar months all children in the reporting population spent in care. This denominator, expressed in “visit months,” is aggregated over all children and refers to the number of months in which visits should have occurred.

Numerator: the aggregate number of monthly caseworker visits made to the children in the reporting population. If a child is visited more than once in a month, only one visit is counted.

For example, if a state had 1,000 children in its foster care caseworker visits reporting population, and if these children were in care the entire 12-month period, then each child should have been visited each month he or she was in care. Therefore, the aggregate number of “visit months” those 1,000 children should have been visited would be 12,000 for the year. That would be the MCV denominator.

In this example, the numerator would be the aggregate number of required visit months where at least one actual caseworker visit was made to each of those children. Assume that a total of 10,000 visits occurred (not the expected 12,000) during the year for the 1,000 children in the reporting population. To calculate the correct numerator for MCV, a further assessment must be made to count only one visit for each month for each visited child. Thus, if 100 of these children were visited twice in six of the months of the year, a deduction of 600 (100x6) must be made to exclude multiple visits during the same month. Therefore, the total for the numerator is 9,400 (10,000–600) actual “visit months” for the year.

The MCV percentage is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying that product by 100 [(numerator / denominator) x 100]. This calculation is expressed as a percentage and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Calculation of Children Receiving Visits in the Home (VIH)

To calculate the percentage of monthly visits that occur in the home, the following data are required:

Denominator: the number of monthly caseworker visits made to children in the reporting population (this will be the same number as the numerator for the MCV calculation). Note that the number in this denominator is expressed as the number of “visit months” aggregated over all the children (but limited to counting only one visit per child per month).

Numerator: the number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population that occurred in the child’s home.³ Note that the numerator is expressed as “visit months,” and it is aggregated over all the visits to all the children in the foster care reporting population (but limited to only counting one visit per child per month).

The VIH percentage is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying that product by 100 [(numerator / denominator) x 100]. This calculation is expressed as a percentage and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Data Collection Methodology

States may choose to report caseworker visits data based on their total foster care population or based on sample data. States that choose to submit sample data must use a sampling methodology that has been approved by the Children’s Bureau Regional Office in consultation with the Administration for Children, Youth and Families’ Office of Data, Analysis, Research and Evaluation. The following States elected to submit sample data for 2012, 2013, and/or 2014:

State	Used Sample in 2012	Used Sample in 2013	Used Sample in 2014
Alabama	X	X	X
Hawaii	X	X	X
Idaho	X		
Michigan	X	X	X
Mississippi			X
Pennsylvania	X	X	X

² Note that even though a state may keep some youth in foster care beyond age 17, only children and youth under age 18 on the first day of the FY are included in this calculation.

³ A child’s home is defined as the home where the child is residing, whether in-state or out-of-state, and can include the foster placement setting.

Appendix D

Child Welfare Outcomes Report: Data Sources and Elements¹

CONTEXT INFORMATION

ITEMS		DATA SOURCES AND ELEMENTS
Context Statistics		
Total children under 18 years		U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
Race/ethnicity (%)		U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
Child population in poverty (%)		U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
Caseworker visits for children in foster care		States submit data in conjunction with Child and Family Services Plans and Annual Progress and Services Reports
Child Maltreatment Data (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System)		
Children subject of an investigated report alleging child maltreatment		U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF/ACYF, Children's Bureau, National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 3.1, Children Subject of a CPS Investigation or Assessment by Disposition
Total child maltreatment victims		Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level (2) NCANDS SDC: Sum of Item 3.1A, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment Was Substantiated; 3.1B, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment Was Indicated; and 3.1C, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment Was Given an Alternative Response That Identified Child Victim(s)
Child fatalities		Three possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Element 34, Maltreatment Death (2) NCANDS Agency File: Element 4.1 (3) NCANDS SDC: Item 5.1, Child Victims Who Died as a Result of Maltreatment
Age of child victims		Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Element 12, Child Age at Report; or a combination of Element 6, Report Date, and Element 13, Child Date of Birth (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.2, Child Victims By Age
Race/ethnicity of child victims		Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 15 through 20, Child Race; and Element 21, Child Ethnicity (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.4, Child Victims by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity; and Item 4.5, Child Victims by Race
Maltreatment types of child victims		Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 26 through 33, Maltreatment Type, Maltreatment Disposition Level (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.1, Child Victims by Type of Maltreatment
Response time		Mean response time in hours is computed from the Child File records using the Report Date, Field 6; and the Investigation Start Date, Field 7. The result is converted to hours by multiplying by 24. Median response time in hours is computed from the NCANDS Child File records using the Report Date, Field 6; and the Investigation Start Date, Field 7. The result is converted to hours by multiplying by 24.
Characteristics of Children in Foster Care (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System)		
Total number (for each FY) In care on 10/1 • Entered care • Exited care • In care on 9/30		U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF/ACYF, Children's Bureau, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Median length of stay (for each FY) In care on 10/1 • Exited care • In care on 9/30		AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Age of children (for each FY) In care on 10/1 • Entered care • Exited care • In care on 9/30		AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Race/ethnicity of children (for each FY) In care on 10/1 • Entered care • Exited care • In care on 9/30		AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; and Element 9, Hispanic Origin
Characteristics of Children Waiting for Adoption on 9/30 (AFCARS)		
Total waiting children		AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights
Number of waiting children whose parents' rights have been terminated		AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights
Age of children waiting for adoption		AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights

¹ Note: All of the data may be found on the Child Welfare Outcomes Data Site: (<https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwdatasite/>). Not all of the data listed are included in the report.

ITEMS	DATA SOURCES AND ELEMENTS
Race/ethnicity of children waiting for adoption	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; Element 9, Hispanic Origin; Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights
Characteristics of Children Adopted (AFCARS)	
Total children adopted	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 21, Date Adoption Legalized
Age of children adopted	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 4, State Involvement; Element 5, Child's Date of Birth; and Element 21, Date Adoption Legalized
Race/ethnicity of children adopted	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 4, State Involvement; Element 7, Race; and Element 8, Hispanic Origin

OUTCOME INFORMATION

OUTCOME MEASURES	DATA SOURCES AND ELEMENTS
Outcome 1. Reduce Recurrence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (NCANDS)	
1.1 Recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months	NCANDS Child File: Field 4, Child ID; Field 6, Report Date; Fields 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level(s); and Field 34, Maltreatment Death
Outcome 2. Reduce the Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care (NCANDS and AFCARS)	
2.1 Maltreatment in foster care	AFCARS Annual Foster Care Database: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care NCANDS Child File: Field 4, Child ID; Field 6, Report Date; Fields 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level(s); Field 34, Maltreatment Death; and Fields 89,108, 127, Perpetrator Relationship
Outcome 3. Increase Permanency for Children in Foster Care (AFCARS)	
3.1 Exits of children from foster care	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.2 Exits of children with a diagnosed disability	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 10, Child Diagnosed With Disabilities; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.3 Exits of children older than age 12 at entry	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.4 Exits to emancipation	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.5 Exits by race/ethnicity	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; Element 9, Hispanic Origin; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
Outcome 4. Reduce Time to Reunification Without Increasing Reentry (AFCARS)	
4.1 Time to reunification	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
4.2 Children reentering foster care	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 19, Total Number of Removals; Element 20, Date of Discharge From Last Foster Care Episode; and Element 21, Date of Latest Removal
Outcome 5. Reduce Time in Foster Care to Adoption (AFCARS)	
5.1 Time to adoption	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
Outcome 6. Increase Placement Stability (AFCARS)	
6.1 Number of placements by time in care	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 23, Date of Placement in Current Placement Setting; Element 24, Number of Previous Settings in Episode; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Outcome 7. Reduce Placement of Young Children in Group Homes or Institutions (AFCARS)	
7.1 Most recent placement settings of children age 12 or younger who entered care during FY	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 23, Date of Placement in Current Placement Setting; Element 41, Current Placement Setting

Appendix E

Child Maltreatment 2014: Summary of Key Findings

The following are key findings from *Child Maltreatment 2014*. The statistics in the Child Maltreatment series of reports are based on data submitted to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

The full *Child Maltreatment 2014* report is available on the Children's Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014>.

Overview

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories have child abuse and neglect reporting laws that mandate certain professionals and institutions to report suspected maltreatment to a child protective services (CPS) agency.

Each state has its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that are based on standards set by Federal law. Federal legislation provides a foundation for states by identifying a set of acts or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, retained the existing definition of child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:

Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

Most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: neglect, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Although any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found separately, they can occur in combination.

What is the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)?

NCANDS is a federally sponsored effort that collects and analyzes annual data on child abuse and neglect. The 1988 CAPTA amendments directed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Department) to establish a national data collection and analysis program. The Children's Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families within the Department collects and analyzes the data.

The data are submitted voluntarily by the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The first report from NCANDS was based on data for 1990. This report for fiscal year (FY) 2014 data is the 25th issuance of this annual publication.

How are the data used?

NCANDS data are used for the *Child Maltreatment* report series. In addition, data collected by NCANDS are a critical source of information for many publications, reports, and activities of the Federal government and other groups. Data from NCANDS are used in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs), in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, and to measure the performance of several Federal programs.

What data are collected?

Once an allegation (called a referral) of abuse and neglect is received by a CPS agency, it is either screened in for further attention by CPS or it is screened out. A screened-in referral is called a report. CPS agencies respond to all reports. In most states, the majority of reports receive investigations, which determine if a child was maltreated or is at risk of maltreatment and establish whether an intervention is needed. Some reports receive alternative responses, which focus primarily upon the needs of the family and do not determine if a child was maltreated or is at risk of maltreatment.

NCANDS collects case-level data on all children who received a CPS agency response in the form of an investigation response or an alternative response. Case-level data include information about the characteristics of screened-in referrals (reports) of abuse and neglect that are made to CPS agencies, the children involved, the types of maltreatment they suffered, the

dispositions of the CPS responses, the risk factors of the child and the caregivers, the services that are provided, and the perpetrators.

Where are the data available?

The Child Maltreatment reports are available on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

Restricted use files of the NCANDS data are archived at the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) at Cornell University. Researchers who are interested in using these data for statistical analyses may contact NDACAN at ndacan@cornell.edu.

How many allegations of maltreatment were reported and received an investigation or assessment for abuse and neglect?

During 2014, CPS agencies received an estimated 3.6 million referrals involving approximately 6.6 million children. Among the 46 states that reported both screened-in and screened-out referrals, 60.7 percent of referrals were screened in, and 39.3 percent were screened out. For 2014, 2.2 million reports were screened in. The national rate of screened-in referrals (reports) was 28.9 per 1,000 children in the national population.

Who reported child maltreatment?

For 2014, professionals made three-fifths (62.7 percent) of reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. The three largest percentages of report sources were from such professionals as legal and law enforcement personnel (18.1 percent), education personnel (17.7 percent), and social services personnel (11.0 percent). The term “professional” means that the person had contact with the alleged child maltreatment victim as part of his or her job. This term includes teachers, police officers, lawyers, and social services staff. Nonprofessionals—including friends, neighbors, and relatives—submitted one-fifth of reports (18.6 percent). Unclassified sources submitted the remaining one-fifth of reports (18.7 percent). Unclassified includes anonymous, “other,” and unknown report sources. States use the code “other” for any report source that does not have an NCANDS-designated code.

Who were the child victims?

Fifty-two states submitted data to NCANDS about the dispositions of children who received one or more CPS responses. For 2014, approximately 3.2 million children were the subjects of at least one report. More than four-fifth of these children (83.7 percent) were the subject of only one report, 12.6 percent were the subject of two reports, and less than 4 percent (3.7 percent) were the subject of three or more reports. Approximately one-fifth of children were found to be victims with dispositions of substantiated (17.8 percent), indicated (0.8 percent), and “alternative response victim” (0.6 percent). The remaining four-fifths of the children were determined to be nonvictims of maltreatment.

For 2014, there were a nationally estimated 702,000 victims of child abuse and neglect. The victim rate was 9.4 victims per 1,000 children in the population. Victim demographics include:

- Victims in their first year of life had the highest rate of victimization, at 24.4 per 1,000 children of the same age in the national population.
- The majority of victims consisted of three races or ethnicities—White (44.0 percent), Hispanic (22.7 percent), and African-American (21.4 percent).

What were the most common types of maltreatment?

As in prior years, the greatest percentages of children suffered from neglect (75.0 percent) and physical abuse (17.0 percent). A child may have suffered from multiple forms of maltreatment, and all maltreatment types were counted for each child.

How many children died from abuse or neglect?

Child fatalities are the most tragic consequence of maltreatment. For 2014, 50 states reported 1,546 fatalities. Based on these data, a nationally estimated 1,580 children died from abuse and neglect. According to the analyses performed on the child fatalities for whom case-level data were obtained:

- The national rate of child fatalities was 2.13 deaths per 100,000 children.
- Nearly three-quarters (70.7 percent) of all child fatalities were younger than 3 years old.
- Boys had a higher child fatality rate than girls, at 2.48 boys per 100,000 boys in the population.
- Girls died of abuse and neglect at a rate of 1.82 per 100,000 girls in the population.
- Almost 90 percent (88.4 percent) of child fatalities comprised White (43.0 percent), African-American (30.3 percent), and Hispanic (15.1 percent) victims.
- Four-fifths (79.3 percent) of child fatalities involved at least one parent.

Who abused and neglected children?

A perpetrator is the person who is responsible for the abuse or neglect of a child. Fifty-one states reported 522,945 perpetrators. According to the analyses performed on the perpetrators for whom case-level data were obtained:

- Four-fifths (83.2 percent) of perpetrators were between the ages of 18 and 44 years.
- More than one-half (54.1 percent) of perpetrators were women, 44.8 percent of perpetrators were men, and 1.1 percent were of unknown sex.
- The three largest percentages of perpetrators were White (48.8 percent), African-American (20.0 percent), or Hispanic (19.8 percent).

Who received services?

CPS agencies provide services to children and their families, both in their homes and in foster care. Reasons for providing services may include (1) preventing future instances of child maltreatment and (2) remedying conditions that brought the children and their families to the attention of the agency. During 2014:

- Forty-seven states reported that approximately 2.9 million children received prevention services.
- Based on data from 48 states, approximately 1.3 million children received postresponse services from a CPS agency.
- Two-thirds (63.7 percent) of victims and one-third (32.0 percent) of nonvictims received postresponse services.

Appendix F

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb>

The AFCARS Report

Preliminary FY¹ 2014 Estimates as of July 2015 • No. 22

SOURCE: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2014 data²

Numbers at a Glance

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FY	404,878	398,057	397,153	400,989	415,129
Number entered foster care during the FY	256,092	251,958	251,850	255,080	264,746
Number exited foster care during the FY	257,806	247,607	240,987	240,392	238,230
Number waiting to be adopted on September 30 of the FY	108,746	106,561	102,058	104,493	107,918
Number waiting to be adopted whose parental rights (for all living parents) were terminated during the FY	65,747	62,585	59,147	59,662	60,898
Number adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during the FY	53,547	50,901	52,046	50,841	50,644

Children in Foster Care on September 30, 2014 • N=415,129

Age as of September 30		Years	Sex	Percent	Number
Mean		8.7	Male	52%	216,645
Median		8.0	Female	48%	198,426

Age as of September 30	Percent	Number	Most Recent Placement Setting	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	7%	28,607	Pre-Adoptive Home	4%	15,554
1 Year	8%	33,264	Foster Family Home (Relative)	29%	120,334
2 Years	7%	29,726	Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	46%	190,454
3 Years	6%	26,512	Group Home	6%	23,233
4 Years	6%	23,719	Institution	8%	32,955
5 Years	5%	22,714	Supervised Independent Living	1%	4,474
6 Years	5%	22,070	Runaway	1%	4,544
7 Years	5%	20,456	Trial Home Visit	5%	21,989
8 Years	5%	18,770			
9 Years	4%	17,216			
10 Years	4%	15,500			
11 Years	4%	14,974			
12 Years	4%	14,983			
13 Years	4%	16,651			
14 Years	5%	19,138			
15 Years	5%	22,622			
16 Years	6%	26,119			
17 Years	6%	26,476			
18 Years	2%	9,561			
19 Years	1%	3,245			
20 Years	1%	2,386			

Case Plan Goal	Percent	Number
Reunify With Parent(s) or Principal Caretaker(s)	55%	218,889
Live With Other Relative(s)	3%	12,351
Adoption	25%	99,521
Long-Term Foster Care	4%	15,008
Emancipation	5%	18,934
Guardianship	4%	14,739
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	5%	18,408

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

² Data from both the regular and revised AFCARS file submissions received by July 9, 2015, are included in this report. Missing data are excluded from each table. Therefore, the totals within each distribution may not equal the total provided for that subpopulation (e.g., number in care on September 30 may not match the sum across ages for that group).

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	9,517
Asian	1%	2,107
Black or African American	24%	97,540
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	693
Hispanic (of any race)	22%	90,299
White	42%	174,477
Unknown/Unable to Determine	3%	12,747
Two or More Races	7%	27,179

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

Time in Care	Months
Mean	20.8
Median	12.6

Time in Care (Months)	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	5%	22,129
1–5 Months	23%	94,358
6–11 Months	20%	83,978
12–17 Months	15%	62,447
18–23 Months	10%	39,620
24–29 Months	7%	29,401
30–35 Months	5%	18,833
3–4 Years	9%	36,292
5 Years or More	7%	28,058

Children Entering Foster Care During FY 2014 • N=264,746

Age at Entry	Years
Mean	7.4
Median	6.4

Age at Entry	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	17%	45,535
1 Year	7%	19,442
2 Years	6%	17,061
3 Years	6%	15,461
4 Years	5%	14,500
5 Years	5%	14,092
6 Years	5%	13,338
7 Years	5%	12,355
8 Years	4%	10,933
9 Years	4%	9,925
10 Years	3%	9,139
11 Years	3%	8,863
12 Years	3%	9,217
13 Years	4%	10,904
14 Years	5%	12,600
15 Years	6%	14,672
16 Years	6%	14,795
17 Years	4%	10,403
18 Years	0%	1,020
19 Years	0%	345
20 Years	0%	137

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	5,960
Asian	1%	1,635
Black or African American	22%	57,324
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	559
Hispanic (of any race)	21%	56,207
White	45%	118,168
Unknown/Unable to Determine	3%	7,928
Two or More Races	6%	16,338

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

Children Exiting Foster Care During FY 2014 • N=238,230

Age at Exit	Years
Mean	9.0
Median	8.0

Age at Exit	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	4%	10,636
1 Year	8%	18,768
2 Years	8%	18,551
3 Years	7%	16,348
4 Years	6%	14,916
5 Years	6%	14,007
6 Years	5%	12,983
7 Years	5%	11,874
8 Years	4%	10,424
9 Years	4%	9,446
10 Years	4%	8,665
11 Years	3%	7,980
12 Years	3%	7,477
13 Years	3%	7,691
14 Years	4%	8,643
15 Years	4%	10,026
16 Years	5%	11,711
17 Years	5%	12,051
18 Years	8%	18,320
19 Years	2%	5,114
20 Years	0%	923

Time in Care	Months
Mean	19.5
Median	13.3

Time in Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	11%	26,316
1–5 Months	15%	36,532
6–11 Months	20%	46,920
12–17 Months	16%	37,860
18–23 Months	12%	27,568
24–29 Months	8%	19,041
30–35 Months	5%	12,162
3–4 Years	8%	20,091
5 Years or More	5%	11,534

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	4,786
Asian	1%	1,518
Black or African American	23%	53,969
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	525
Hispanic (of any race)	21%	50,613
White	45%	106,000
Unknown/Unable to Determine	2%	5,485
Two or More Races	6%	15,026

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

Reasons for Discharge	Percent	Number
Reunification With Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	51%	121,241
Living With Other Relative(s)	7%	15,774
Adoption	21%	49,693
Emancipation	9%	22,392
Guardianship	9%	21,055
Transfer to Another Agency	2%	4,173
Runaway	0%	1,138
Death of Child	0%	326

Children Waiting to Be Adopted³ on September 30, 2014 • N=107,918

Age as of September 30	Years
Mean	7.7
Median	6.8

Age at Entry Into Foster Care	Years
Mean	5.0
Median	4.1

Age as of September 30	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	4%	4,108
1 Year	9%	10,250
2 Years	9%	9,981
3 Years	8%	8,727
4 Years	7%	7,624
5 Years	7%	7,164
6 Years	6%	6,883
7 Years	6%	6,385
8 Years	5%	5,898
9 Years	5%	5,396
10 Years	5%	4,885
11 Years	4%	4,630
12 Years	4%	4,469
13 Years	4%	4,606
14 Years	4%	4,663
15 Years	4%	4,716
16 Years	4%	4,255
17 Years	3%	3,278

Age at Entry Into Foster Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	25%	27,242
1 Year	9%	9,565
2 Years	8%	8,391
3 Years	7%	7,749
4 Years	7%	7,507
5 Years	7%	7,162
6 Years	6%	6,711
7 Years	5%	5,812
8 Years	5%	5,255
9 Years	4%	4,701
10 Years	4%	4,255
11 Years	4%	3,777
12 Years	3%	3,235
13 Years	3%	2,777
14 Years	2%	1,924
15 Years	1%	1,253
16 Years	0%	526
17 Years	0%	71

Placement Type	Percent	Number
Pre-Adoptive Home	13%	14,059
Foster Family Home (Relative)	25%	26,769
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	52%	56,349
Group Home	4%	3,779
Institution	5%	5,608
Supervised Independent Living	0%	117
Runaway	0%	413
Trial Home Visit	1%	674

Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	1,991
Asian	0%	405
Black or African American	23%	24,360
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	129
Hispanic (of any race)	23%	24,938
White	42%	45,543
Unknown/Unable to Determine	2%	2,405
Two or More Races	8%	8,105

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

Sex	Percent	Number
Male	52%	56,445
Female	48%	51,465

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

Time in Care	Months
Mean	32.3
Median	24.8

Time in Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	0%	419
1–5 Months	4%	4,392
6–11 Months	10%	10,705
12–17 Months	17%	18,548
18–23 Months	16%	17,432
24–29 Months	14%	15,265
30–35 Months	9%	9,923
3–4 Years	18%	19,082
5 Years or More	11%	12,152

Of Children Waiting for Adoption Whose Parents' Parental Rights Have Been Terminated (N=58,887), Time Elapsed Since Termination of Parental Rights as of September 30, 2012

Time since TPR	Months
Mean	21.1
Median	10.0

Children Adopted With Public Agency Involvement in FY 2014⁴ • N=50,644

Age at Adoption	Years
Mean	6.2
Median	5.1

Time Elapsed From Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption	Months
Mean	12.0
Median	8.7

Age at Adoption	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	2%	1,053
1 Year	12%	6,203
2 Years	14%	7,106
3 Years	11%	5,576
4 Years	10%	4,822
5 Years	8%	4,183
6 Years	7%	3,681
7 Years	6%	3,043
8 Years	5%	2,605
9 Years	5%	2,291
10 Years	4%	1,892
11 Years	4%	1,797
12 Years	3%	1,470
13 Years	3%	1,284
14 Years	2%	1,076
15 Years	2%	933
16 Years	2%	801
17 Years	1%	631
18 Years	0%	147
19 Years	0%	23
20 Years	0%	17

Time Elapsed From Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	2%	1,232
1–5 Months	29%	14,409
6–11 Months	35%	17,681
12–17 Months	17%	8,270
18–23 Months	7%	3,618
24–29 Months	4%	1,870
30–35 Months	2%	916
3–4 Years	3%	1,279
5 Years or more	1%	617

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%	735
Asian	0%	192
Black or African American	19%	9,687
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	87
Hispanic (of any race)	22%	11,006
White	48%	24,180
Unknown/Unable to Determine	1%	743
Two or More Races	8%	3,996

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

Adoptive Family Structure	Percent	Number
Married Couple	67%	33,208
Unmarried Couple	4%	1,759
Single Female	26%	13,170
Single Male	3%	1,574

Relationship of Adoptive Parents to Child Prior to Adoption	Percent	Number
Non-Relative	14%	6,796
Foster Parent	52%	25,185
Stepparent	2%	984
Other Relative	32%	15,667

NOTE: For the purposes of this table, relatives who were also foster parents are classified only as relatives.

Sex	Percent	Number
Male	51%	25,808
Female	49%	24,824

Receive Adoption Subsidy	Percent	Number
Yes	91%	45,979
No	9%	4,618