

WHO CARES

A NATIONAL COUNT OF FOSTER
HOMES AND FAMILIES
OCTOBER 2019





About The Chronicle

The Chronicle of Social Change is a nonprofit, independent news site covering child welfare, juvenile justice and other critical systems serving vulnerable children and families.



www.chronicleofsocialchange.org



www.facebook.com/ChronicleofSocialChange



[@ChronicleSC](https://twitter.com/ChronicleSC)



Today's Discussion

Who Cares Background & Methodology

Site Tour

Key Findings

Questions

Moderated by

John Kelly, Editor-in-Chief, *The Chronicle of Social Change*

Daniel Heimpel, Publisher, *The Chronicle of Social Change*



A QUICK OVERVIEW:

Who Cares? An Annual Data Collection Project

Background & Our Methodology

BACKGROUND

Since 2017, *The Chronicle of Social Change* has been working to build the nation's first public resource on foster care capacity. We collect data directly from each state, and combine that with specially obtained federal reports to shed light on two critical questions.

DRIVING QUESTIONS

- How many children and youth are in foster care today?
- And where and with whom are they living?



A QUICK OVERVIEW:

Who Cares? An Annual Data Collection Project

Our Methodology

SCOPE

Over the years, our scope has widened in the hopes of gaining a long-term picture of total state capacity when it comes to foster care. We ask that states provide responses to the questions below for March 31, or the closest possible point in time.

DATA POINTS

1. Total licensed homes
2. Non-relative foster homes
3. Relatives with an active, ongoing placement of youth in their homes
4. The number of congregate care providers that take placements of foster youth, and the number of total beds available in them
5. The number of children in foster care placements of any kind



A QUICK OVERVIEW:

Who Cares? An Annual Data Collection Project

Our Methodology

FEDERAL DATA

We work with professional researchers to acquire and aggregate data collected through the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

While this data does lag behind present day by more than a year, it allows us to provide numbers on the demographics of both foster parents and foster youth, and trends in the number of youth living in each type of foster care setting.

Last year, our projection of the number of children in foster care was within 5 of the AFCARS number.



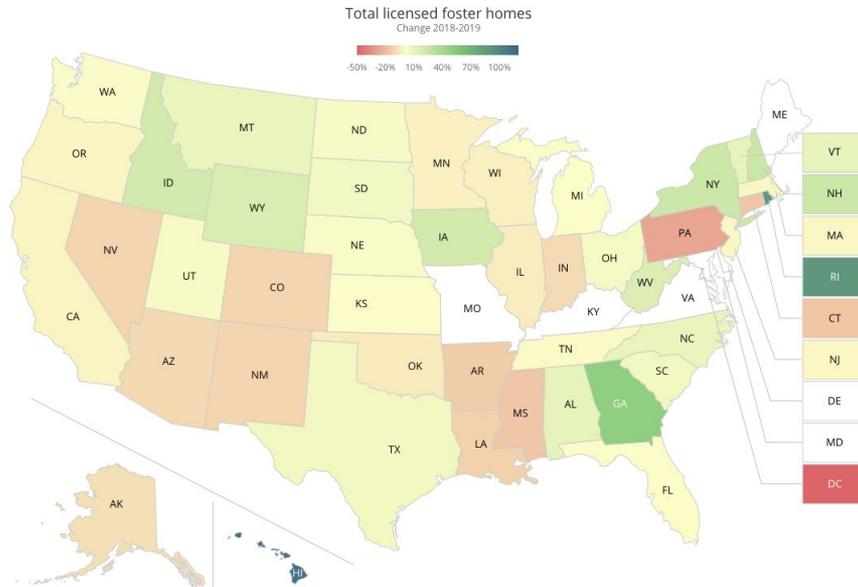
WHO CARES:

A National Count of Foster Homes and Families

Who Cares is the nation's first public resource on foster care capacity. *The Chronicle of Social Change* collects data directly from each state, and combines that with specially obtained federal reports to shed light on two critical questions:

How many kids are in foster care today? And where are they living?

This year the data suggests that nationwide, the number of youth in care is going down, and the number of foster homes is going up. But there are plenty of states still struggling with capacity, support of relatives, and racial disparity.



FOSTERCARECAPACITY.ORG



WHO CARES:

A National Count of Foster Homes and Families

Explore more data



Total licensed foster homes

2018–2019



Non-relative homes

2012–2019

Changes in the number non-relative foster homes from 2012 to 2019



Youth in care

2008–2019

Includes youth living in foster homes, with relatives and in congregate care settings. Federally collected figures for 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017; state-reported figures for 2018 and 2019.



Foster youth living in congregate care

2011–2017

Foster youth who are living in group homes, institutions, and other residential care settings



Foster youth living with relatives

2011–2017

Youth placed with family members or "fictive kin" during a removal to foster care



Youth living in unpaid placement

2011–2017

FOSTERCARECAPACITY.ORG





LOUISIANA

Switch state ▼

Click [+](#) to see charts

Foster care capacity*

Collected by the Chronicle of Social Change

→	<p>+ Youth in care</p> <p>Includes youth living in foster homes, with relatives and in congregate care settings. Federally collected figures for 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017; state-reported figures for 2018 and 2019.</p>	2008 5,065	2009 4,786	2010 4,453	2011 4,531
		2012 4,044	2013 3,955	2014 4,329	2015 4,545
		2016 4,461	2017 4,460	2018 4,491	2019 4,157
→	<p>+ Total licensed foster homes</p>	2018 2,542	2019 2,222		
→	<p>+ Non-relative homes</p> <p>Changes in the number non-relative foster homes from 2012 to 2019</p>	2012 1,768	2017 1,903	2018 1,738	2019 1,619
→	<p>+ Relatives with active placements</p>	2018 1,075	2019 995		



EXPANDED STATE DATA VIEW



LOUISIANA

Switch state ▾

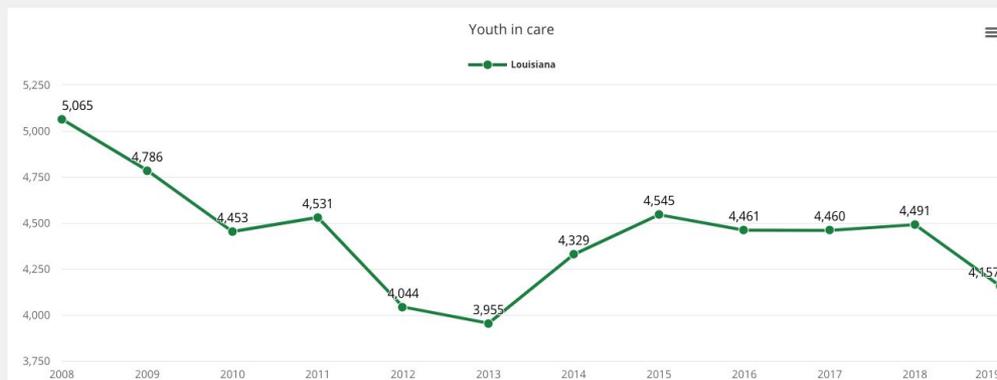
Click + to see charts

Foster care capacity*

Collected by the Chronicle of Social Change

- Youth in care

Includes youth living in foster homes, with relatives and in congregate care settings. Federally collected figures for 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017; state-reported figures for 2018 and 2019.



FINDINGS: NUMBER OF YOUTH IN CARE DECLINING

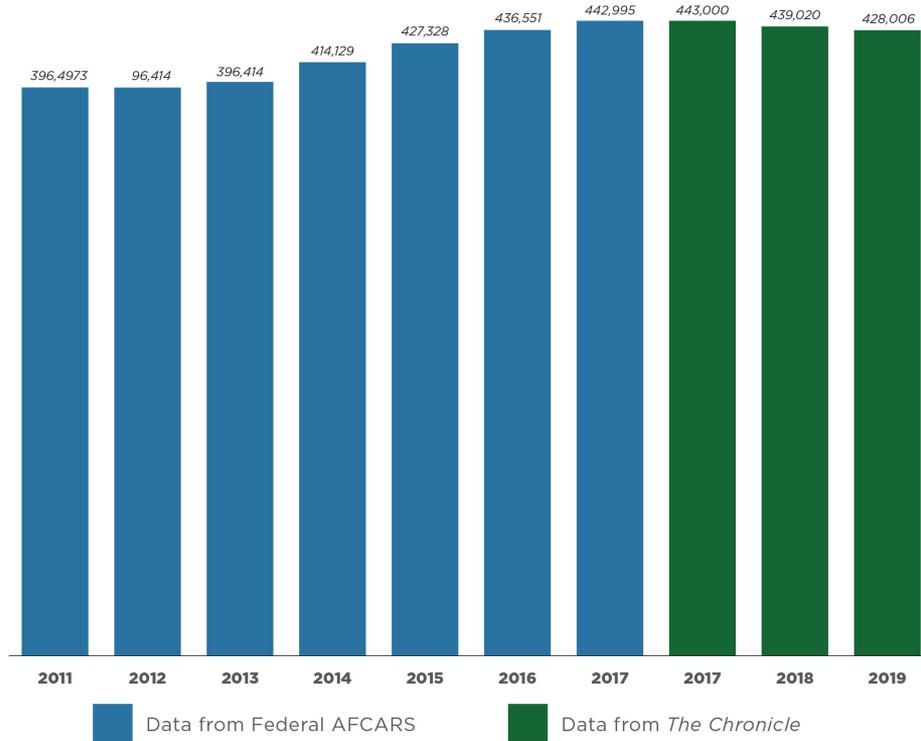


Data collected directly from states shows that the national total is declining, even as some states continue to grapple with surging numbers of youth.

Our 2019 count has the total number of youth in care just below **430,000**, about a 3 percent decline since 2017.



YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE



FINDINGS: FOSTER HOMES ON THE RISE



Based on state data, the number of licensed homes was 210,000 to 215,000 in 2018. In 2019, the range is up to between 220,000 and 225,000.

We were able to make a comparison of licensed homes in 45 states, and 20 of them saw at least some decline in quantity. Of those, 11 states saw a decline of more than 10 percent.

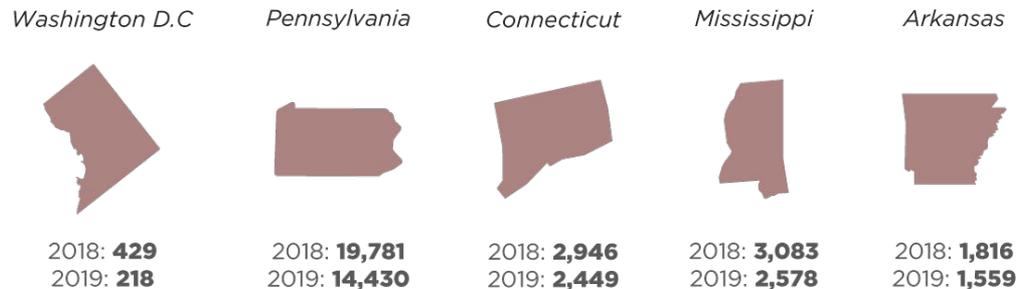


TOTAL LICENSED HOMES

FIVE BIGGEST INCREASES



FIVE BIGGEST DECREASES



FINDINGS: THE CONGREGATE CARE CLIFF



Nationwide, AFCARS shows the number of youth in group homes and institutions declined by about 12 percent between 2011 and 2017.

But 20 states have seen the number of youth in congregate care rise during that same period.

10 of those have seen an increase of 20 percent or more.

Family First Prevention Services Act, taking effect this month, will complicate how states pay for institutional care.



YOUTH LIVING IN CONGREGATE CARE



Indiana
2011: **1,104**
2017: **1,326**

+148%



Tennessee
2011: **1,345**
2017: **1,622**

+21%



Georgia
2011: **1,295**
2017: **1,601**

+24%



North Carolina
2011: **985**
2017: **1,262**

+28%



Ohio
2011: **1,583**
2017: **2,031**

+28%



Arkansas
2011: **642**
2017: **835**

+30%



Kansas
2011: **333**
2017: **545**

+21%



Arizona
2011: **1,343**
2017: **2,219**

+65%



New Mexico
2011: **89**
2017: **171**

+92%



New Hampshire
2011: **118**
2017: **311**

+164%



FINDINGS: RISING ROLE OF RELATIVES & UNPAID CAREGIVERS



Forty states saw increases in the number of youths living with relatives between 2011 and 2017; 30 of those states saw an uptick of 40 percent or more.

Role of relative caregivers will only increase with the onset of the Family First Prevention Services Act (enables states to spend more federal dollars to avoid the use of foster care in some cases)

The number of youth living in a home without payment attached went up 32 percent between 2011 and 2017, from 81,838 to 108,426.





UNPAID PLACEMENTS

2011: **81,838**

2017: **108,426**

+32%



FINDINGS: **OVERALL, YOUNGER AND WHITER**

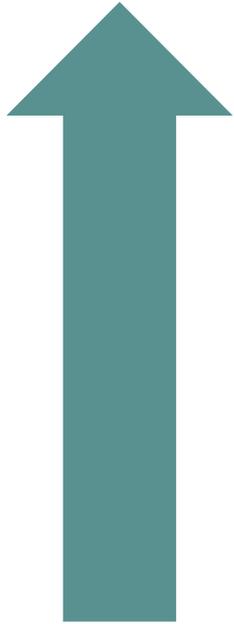


In 2011, 39 percent of youth were 13 or older – that was down to 31 percent in 2017. Thirty-two states saw the number of teens in care decline.

In the same time frame, the percentage of foster youth identified as white went up 21 percent. White youth made up 67 percent of foster youth as of 2017, up from 60 percent in 2011.



FINDINGS: INCREASES AMONG NATIVE & BLACK YOUTH



Many of the states with large Native American populations saw a dramatic uptick in the number of Native youth in care as well.

Despite the decline in the proportion of black youth in foster care nationally, a number of states saw big spikes in this population.



NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Minnesota



2011: **1,285**
2017: **3,192**

+148%

Arizona



2011: **786**
2017: **1,192**

+52%

Wisconsin



2011: **380**
2017: **667**

+76%

North Dakota



2011: **393**
2017: **642**

+63%

Montana



2011: **843**
2017: **1,546**

+83%

BLACK YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Georgia



2011: **3,870**
2017: **6,003**

+51%

New Hampshire



2011: **45**
2017: **134**

+198%

Indiana



2011: **3,736**
2017: **5,639**

+51%

Arizona



2011: **1,623**
2017: **2,343**

+148%

Minnesota



2011: **1,340**
2017:

+79%



Reading Room: *Chronicle*

Who Cares 2019: Executive Summary

A Complete Guide to the Family First Prevention Services Act

New Bill Offers Sweetener to Waiver States on Family First Act

Kin Prop up Illinois' Foster Care System, With Limited Support

With Foster Care Numbers At A 15-Year High, Georgia Looks to Relatives

We Want Kids to Grow Up in Safe Families. So Let's Measure That.



Chat Room Questions (answered in recording)

From Matt Anderson to All panelists: (10:18 AM) As these placements increase and with a move to licensing and paying relatives, what will the fiscal implications be for states?

From Daniel Heimpel to All panelists and attendees: (10:23 AM): Here is that paper:

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3437849 — HIDDEN FOSTER CARE

From Matt Anderson to All panelists: (10:27 AM): I think i missed the date range for the 2019 data. what is that range and are they projections at this point?

From Mary JO Pitzl to All panelists: (10:28 AM): Is there data on where kids go when they leave the foster system — either by aging out, by dropping out, getting adopted, reunified?

From Shaquita Ogletree to All panelists: (10:30 AM): Are you looking at the different types of congregate care placement for youth (specifically treatment care/PRTF)?

From Sara Wilson to All panelists and attendees: (10:31 AM): Nationally, the number of licensed homes has increased, but in some states (including Washington D.C. where I cover) have seen a sharp decline in licensed homes. Is there any research or ideas about the cause for this decrease? What are the implications for youth in care?

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/child-welfare-2/the-imd-exclusion-a-looming-clash-between-medicaid-and-child-welfare-reform/37920>

QUESTIONS?

We Want to Hear From You!

What are your questions about foster care capacity?

What is being discussed in your state or county?



jkelly@chronicleofsocialchange.org